

# COUNTRY LIFE

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THE DUKE AND H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF FIFE AND CHILDREN.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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A REMOUNT . . .  
. . . COMMISSION?

THE interesting and careful report of the Commission on Indian Cavalry Remounts suggests to our minds the advantages of a similar Commission for England. Royal Commissions are indeed admirable methods of collecting and arranging expert opinions. The Royal Commission on Horse-breeding, for example, issued a report which is a mine of useful information. The present system of buying Army remounts is unsatisfactory. Even if the buyers succeed in securing in time of peace a fairly good stamp of horse, directly there is a scare of war it is found impossible to mount our cavalry and to horse our artillery batteries. When the old or weakly horses which can be made to look well enough on parade, but are utterly unfit for service, are deducted, more than a third of our mounted troops are found to be without trained horses. Nor is this the whole difficulty. There must be many more mounted men in the future than there have been in the past, and more horses will be needed. Whether the Continental system of Government studs be adopted or not, and we are inclined to think that so expensive a measure is not necessary or advisable, in one matter we may well take a leaf out of the book of foreign Governments. They strive to utilise the demands of the Army in such a way that these may be an encouragement to horse-breeders,

and may help to improve the stamp of horses produced in the country. Now this is exactly what our War Office has never done. The policy has been to snub the breeder and to rest on the services of the middleman or contractor, with the dreadful results which were the scandal of last week. The effect of this is to discourage any effort on the part of horse-breeders to meet the wants of the Government. There is no profit at the prices offered for remounts, unless, indeed, the sums paid go without deduction into the pockets of the breeder. In that case these prices would, we believe, be found sufficient; as things are, the profit is reaped by voracious middlemen.

There is only room for one profit on the Government price for cavalry and artillery horses or mounted infantry cobs. Our reason for thinking this is as follows. The class of horses required by the Army is an active type of saddle horse or cob. Now, a very large number of breeders are trying to produce a weight-carrying hunter or a high-class polo pony. Sometimes they succeed, and for these animals a price is obtained which places them altogether beyond the reach of the remount agents. But in the effort to raise these high-priced animals a large number of good and useful horses are produced. These horses and ponies are well bred, well shaped, and suitable for remounts. But they are not offered for that purpose, because on the present system the breeder would be offered about £15 to £20 apiece. Now if the breeder could be sure of a market at the Government prices for a reasonable proportion of mists, it would just make all the difference between profit and loss on the whole of his transactions. If, moreover, the Government could arrange to take the horses at three years old, they would find that breeders would be willing to sell them all but the very best. After two years, every year a colt is kept adds, as a rule, more to his prime cost than to his selling value. To be able to part with these misfits to Government at three years old would be in itself an encouragement to horse breeding. All these facts, and many more, would be made plain if the Government would appoint a Royal Commission under a sweeping reference to take evidence. The report of the evidence given before the Commissioners would contain the opinions of experts on the remounting of the Army. It is in fact an excellent way of taking such men into the counsels of the Government.

By this means it would be possible to ascertain, first, the approximate number of horses suitable for military purposes there are in the country; secondly, in what localities the horses are to be found; thirdly, what price would be remunerative to breeders, and therefore an encouragement to breeding; fourthly, what system of purchasing would be the most satisfactory and most likely to exclude corruption; fifthly, at what age the Government should buy their horses; sixthly, whether suitable mares should be registered and the owners subsidised in order to induce breeders to keep good mares on their farms; and, lastly, what encouragement other than the provision of a market, such as, for example, premiums at local shows, the Government should offer. Besides all these primary questions there would be many others, including a careful examination of the present methods of purchase by the Government, so that any good features of the existing system might be retained and the faults and vices carefully eliminated. If the members of such a Commission were carefully selected, and meetings held in various parts of the country, there would be no difficulty whatever in obtaining a mass of useful information. This, if carefully and systematically arranged in the report, would be a work which would have a solid value, apart from the great probability that it would afford some guide to a knowledge of the number of horses available for military purposes, and also to the reserves which could be drawn upon in case of war. "To have a market for our misfits makes all the difference between profit and loss in horse-breeding" was the remark of a well-known breeder and judge the other day, and this is doubtless absolutely true. At all events, we have no doubt whatever that the present system of purchase is wrong, and if the Government have to spend somewhat more on the expense of purchasing and exact more care and knowledge from the remount officers, in the result they will have a far better supply of horses, and will greatly stimulate private enterprise in horse-dealing. If this cannot be or is not done, then there is probably no alternative but the foundation of Government studs, a method of mounting the Army which will have the double evil of being expensive and of indirectly diminishing the number of private breeders.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece is a picture of a group composed of H.R.H. Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, the Duke of Fife, and their two daughters. These grand-daughters of the King and Queen, in their Highland home, carry golf clubs which show that they have taken to the national game early in life.





**M**EN who take the trouble to think will resolutely decline to join the chorus of praise, or at the worst of lukewarm condonation, with which the abortive efforts of Dr. Kuyper as peacemaker have been received. "Blessed are the peacemakers" is gospel truth when peace is made, but there is all the difference in the world between futile effort and the real thing. It has been proved, indeed, scores of times in our industrial quarrels that the mediator who fails, admirable though his motives may be, is an unmixt evil, since he does but encourage to resistance the side which is bound to be beaten in the end. The sacred right of peacemaking, like that of rebellion, can never be exercised harmlessly. Its result must, in the nature of things, be positively good or positively bad.

In all cases of this kind it is a sound plan to consider not only whether the desired end is good in the abstract, but also whether the proposed means are practicable in the concrete. Here it was suggested that sixty enlightened Dutch gentlemen, missionaries of peace, should proceed to South Africa and, after placing themselves in communication with the Boer leaders in the field, should explain to them that they might just as well offer to surrender on some terms or other, and convince them that Great Britain was not likely to be unreasonable. Unfortunately the impossibility of answering three vital questions knocked the bottom out of the scheme. To what particular persons were they to address themselves? How were they to reach them? How were the troops on each side to be occupied while the mission proceeded? There is a fourth question which it might have been worth while for the sixty commissioners to consider. How would they have been received? With sjambok and Mauser or with open arms? Precedent was not encouraging.

In our leading article, which was written deliberately by an expert in a spirit of detachment, attention is directed in a practical spirit to the best means of so dealing with the remount question (which will be of far greater importance in the future than it had been in the past until the South African War began) in such fashion that it may not again become critical. At the same time there are two other points which it is necessary to emphasise. Firstly, we yield to none in desiring the punishment of officers who may be proved to have been careless or corrupt, holding that carelessness is almost as criminal as corruption, or in urging the removal of those who may be proved to have been incompetent. Secondly, we hold that newspapers which cry aloud that, but for the failures of the Remount Department, the war would have been over long ago, are going a great deal too far. One glance at a South African landscape checks the critical proclivities of the average man.

After much squabbling, no doubt, the new Rules of Procedure will be passed, very likely before these lines have reached the eyes of our readers at home. To us they form a subject of amused contemplation. Mr. Balfour, having long been aware that deliberate waste of Parliamentary time proceeds partly from a desire to waste it, but far more from a wish for self-advertisement, has laid the axe at the root of the tree of this advertisement. Members may continue to be loquaciously inquisitive, but they will be too late for the evening papers, and they will not be able to keep the suffering majority away from dinner. In like manner stray motions for the adjournment, for the support of which forty members can always be found, are relegated to nine at night. In fact, as Mr. Lucy has written, good-humouredly, the Government have shown an "almost malignant ingenuity" in taking almost all the fun out of obstruction without really depriving members of opportunities of ventilating grievances. Nett result, be it hoped, that "Ministers may dine," even at parties outside the House; and, possibly, that breakfast parties, such as those which Rogers loved, may be restored.

Those who go down to the sea in ships will long have cause to remember the dreadful winter of 1901-2. In December it was a common saying on the East Coast that no such terrible weather had been experienced since the "October gale," as the hurricane of 1881 is called. But last week produced another equally fearful. As we write, the newspapers have columns devoted to wrecks, some poignantly sad, as that in the Scilly Isles, wherein the crew were seen to the last hanging on to the rigging, only to perish miserably at last. And where the news of disaster is not definite there are accounts of boats washed ashore, wreckage tossed on the boiling sea, and bodies flung ashore—testimony only too certain to calamities. Meanwhile a curious account comes from Lloyd's of bogus messages committed to the sea in sealed bottles. This seems to be a form of humour greatly favoured by some passengers, but when they see the full cruelty of it they will surely refrain in future.

The imperial edict sent forth by the Dowager Empress of China after her reception of the foreign ladies appears to mark a new point of departure in Celestial policy. In passing, we note that Reuter's correspondent draws a singular picture of the woman so often painted as an ogress. She grasped Mrs. Conger's hand for some minutes "and trembling, weeping, and sobbing loudly," conducted herself more in the fashion of a stage heroine than as a grim and cruel Empress. In future Manchus and Chinese are to be permitted to marry, and better still, high-born ladies are recommended not to bandage the feet of their girls, while the youths of China are to be sent abroad to study at Occidental Colleges and acquire the learning of the "foreign devils." Thus does China, that for more centuries than we care to commit ourselves to has stood rooted and steadfast in her ancient unchanging ways, come into the throng of Europe and threaten to have her sons and daughters of the new generation as smart and European and up-to-date as those of her neighbour Japan. Probably some tendency to mock at the sincerity of these good resolutions would have been manifested save for the fact that they are backed up by a solid payment of part of the war indemnity. The simple occidental person has a way of accepting the good professions of those who begin by paying their debts.

At the Zionist meeting in the Shoreditch Town Hall last Saturday the principal things to notice were Mr. Hall Caine's letter and Mr. Zangwill's speech. Both were characteristic, but the former rather "more so." The eminent Manxman wrote with much inflation of England having once been "the sanctuary of Europe" and "the city of refuge for God's refugees," and argued that we should continue to welcome the impecunious alien. The other novelist, if also rhetorical, used his common-sense to more purpose. For some time past he has been an enthusiast for Palestine for the Jews, and he wishes to attain that end with the help of the millions left by Baron Hirsch and destined by him to find Jewish colonising ground in South America. "The road to Palestine could be paved only with gold," exclaimed Mr. Zangwill, "and Baron Hirsch's millions must come over to Zionism." But this dictum will not sail into practical politics till the word "must" can be enforced. Baron Hirsch left his money to one purpose, and, however admirable the new suggestion, those who were entrusted with its administration are not likely to agree to its diversion to another. If the wandering Jew has made up his mind that he will never wander more, except back to his native heath, are there not Jewish millionaires enough left to buy Zion twice over? Mr. Zangwill should turn his attention from the dead to the living.

It is wise to learn of the enemy, and the paper on British sea-power which Admiral Livonius contributes to the February *Deutsche Revue* is not undeserving of attention. Whenever anyone ventures to say that the commercial rivalry between England and Germany is bound one day to take a more sinister form, the answer is an appeal to our Fleet or a question as to what Germany could possibly do. The gallant admiral answers in effect that by taking advantage of the record-making North German Lloyd and Hamburg American steamers, along with the double point of sortie provided by the Baltic and North Sea Canal, a landing could be accomplished on the English shore. He thinks the British Navy large in number of ships, but then in the great encounters of the past, from the defeat of the Armada to the battles of the Napoleonic era, the victory did not go to the larger armament. Our weakness, he asserts, lies in the bad training of our crews, and he contrasts it with what he imagines the greatly superior methods prevalent in the ships of the Kaiser. Upon this an obvious comment is, that whenever our "handy-men" have got a chance of recent years they have acquitted themselves well. More to the point is his remark that so many of our engineers are of German or foreign origin. His jeremiad will not have been in vain if it strengthens the cry of English men for English ships.

It is fairly to be presumed that every reasonable person will agree with the views put forward by the influential deputation

that waited on Mr. Walter Long on Thursday of last week, to ask the consideration of the Local Government Board on the subject of motor-cars. There were three chief points submitted by the deputation—the limit of speed, the means of identification, and the penalty for dangerous driving. No less will the majority of people be fully satisfied with the manner in which Mr. Long met the deputation. With regard to the question of penalties, which at present, as it was urged by the deputation, were insufficient, he went a step further, and suggested that a wider power should be conferred on the law for the public safety generally, and that its clauses should be strengthened. In regard to the identification, all were agreed as to the desirability of the principle, but in practice it became difficult to carry it out either by numbering or by naming. The latter seems the more feasible plan.

But it is more especially in regard to the first question—that of speed—that the deputation's views and their reception are satisfactory. Over and over again in these columns we have pointed out the absurdity of imposing a constant maximum of twelve miles an hour, when twelve miles an hour is a speed of the utmost danger to the public in city streets and twice that pace may be reached with perfect safety on country roads. The deputation seem to have been of the opinion that the speed limit should be abolished altogether, so that the driver might be confronted with the responsibility of driving at a speed that could be labelled "dangerous," according to the circumstances. Fixing a limit, as was pointed out, amounted to legalising a speed that in many circumstances was highly dangerous to the public. Mr. Long not only concurred with the spirit of these observations, but actually made a kind of apology for the existing legislation, saying that it had been passed when motor-car driving was in its infancy. No doubt as a matter of history this is correct, but as a reason for the state of the law it seems to show a considerable lack of imagination on the part of legislators who were not more able to realise what the future of the motor-car would be. We see, however, with thankful hearts a dawning hope of better things.

#### THE PIXIES.

Have e'er you seen the Pixies, the folk not blessed or banned?  
They walk upon the waters, they sail upon the land;  
They make the green grass greener where'er their footsteps fall,  
The wildest of the red deer comes at their call.

They steal from bolted dairies, they milk the cows at grass,  
The maids are kissed a-milking and no one sees them pass;  
They go from stall to linney and ride unbroken foals,  
They seek out human lovers to win them souls.

They're never wisht for sorrow, they're never cold for fear,  
They take no care for harvest or seedtime of the year;  
Age lays no finger on them, the reaper Time goes by  
The Pixies, they who change not, grow old, or die.

The Pixies, though they love us, behold us pass away,  
And are not sad for flowers they gathered yesterday;  
To-day has foxglove for them; if purple hose-in-hose  
Withered last night, to-morrow will have its rose.

NORA CHESSEN.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the authorities that now have possession of most of the netting on the Tay will not be diverted from their wise action in restricting the numbers of the nets by the outcry that their action seems to have raised locally. The cry is that some of the netsmen are being thrown out of work. The answer to that is that the Tay, like most rivers, has suffered from over-netting, and from netting at the wrong time, for a number of years, and that if the over-netting continued the salmon would continue to decrease until the employment of netmen died a natural death from lack of any fish to net. By a fatally false principle the income of most conservancy boards depends on the returns from fishing licences, with the result that as fish (and consequently the returns from such licences) diminish, and conservation becomes more important, the funds to be applied on that conservation become proportionately less. The Tay syndicate is showing signs of sufficient strength and sufficient wisdom to work on other principles, and the result cannot fail to be for the ultimate good both of netting and angling. The best we can wish is that other local authorities, and possibly even the legislature, may accept the action of the Tay people as an object-lesson to be followed in pious imitation.

The Rev. J. M. Bacon recently read a paper at the Society of Arts which was full of interest. He entitled his paper "Scientific Observations at High Altitudes," and it dealt mainly with experiments made in mid-air in a balloon. Among the interesting topics discussed was the existence of definite air currents conforming to the nature of the ground, some drifts following the windings of rivers and others apparently conforming to ridges. These terrestrial formations were found to have effect in directing air currents even as high as 1,000ft. By means of detonating gun-cotton from the balloon, he seems to have established the fact fairly to his satisfaction that the sound

was more audible across the wind than either directly up wind or down—a very remarkable conclusion. But perhaps the most singular of all his observations was that which had for its purpose the testing of the purity—i.e., the freedom from dust in suspension—of atmospheric air collected in different places and altitudes. The sample most completely pure was taken from over the Scilly Islands. This is not surprising; but what is altogether surprising is that one of the very purest samples was collected at "the open end of the Aldersgate Street platform of the Metropolitan Railway." Again, a sample collected on a still day at a height of 2,000ft. above Kingston was found to be considerably more heavily dust-laden than samples taken in the London streets on the following day. These are observations which make one stop and think.

Until this week Dr. McManus of Battersea, and originally, we take leave to conjecture, of Ireland, was unknown to fame, but now Mr. J. Brown, also of Battersea, has given him his opportunity. Mr. Brown hoped the medical officer, Dr. McManus to wit, would not vaccinate in the name of the Council, let the Council should be regarded as a "bogie." Dr. McManus retorted that those who spoke lightly of vaccination "knew as much of the subject as a jackdaw did of Pentecost." He was willing to make a sporting offer. He would go with an anti-vaccinationist member, who should carry a pailful of disinfectant, and they should sit for some time by the bedside of a patient, and he (the doctor) would pay the funeral expenses." Here surely the high proportion of common-sense and mother wit and striking phrase more than outweigh a suspicion of irreverence.

"Caniculus" writes: "In my article on 'Kennels—Great and Small,' some illustrations supplied by Spratt's Patent, probably for mechanical reasons, are not credited to them, whereas Messrs. Boulton and Paul's kennels bear their name. In these circumstances it seems only fair to say that the kennel referred to in the text, as having been tried by me with excellent results, was purchased from Spratt's Patent at a dog show early in 1901. In it one strong and vigorous litter of puppies has already been reared, and I have no doubt it will be the home of many more litters."

The freaks of boys are at times such as to call for more than a reprimand. Last week three schoolboys, in order to "have a warm," set fire to a haystack and destroyed about £60 worth of the farmer's stock. It seems only right to suppose that a birching should follow such deliberate mischief, in the natural course of events. Still stranger, however, is a story of youthful villainy that comes from Scotland, reminding one of the Irish tales of sheep-stealing that culminated in the proverb, "As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb." A boy of thirteen, having discovered a ewe entangled among some brambles, promptly procured an axe and despatched it with a blow on the head. He then dragged it home to his mother's house. The good woman, on her return from the mill where she worked, discovered her small offspring busy skinning the sheep on the cottage floor with a large table knife. Being less bold than her son, she persuaded him to help her to roll up the carcase in a canvas sheet and dispose of it in the river, where it was shortly afterwards discovered. This promising olive branch is now in the hands of the police.

A pure white pair of roe-deer are now at the Zoo, a buck and doe. The doe is somewhat ailing and not in good condition, but the buck is one of the most striking instances of albinism ever seen in England. The white is not the yellowish white of ermine, but a pure snow white with bluish shadows. It is a fine animal, too, and vigorous, with no sign of the weakness which often accompanies absence of the usual amount of colour. No time should be lost in going to see it, for at the hour of writing the buck's horns are in the velvet, and this velvet is absolutely pure snow white, covering the whole of the two antlers like thick rime frost. The eyes are not pink, but almost as colourless as greyish water, and the whole creature looks as if it were made of hoar frost.

It is stated by a Northumbrian correspondent that the German Emperor has been much interested in Earl Grey's public-house trust scheme, and has requested the secretary to furnish him with plans of the large "trust" house shortly to be erected near Messrs. Armstrong's works at Elswick. The details of the scheme generally are also to be published officially in the German State magazines. North Germany is now a great industrial country; with Stettin and Essen as examples of rapid progress, it is not wonderful that the drink question in industrial districts is becoming a serious one. It is a compliment, and a thoroughly deserved one, that the Kaiser has desired to refer to Earl Grey's strongly supported scheme of communal control. A few days ago the first of the Northumbrian public-houses was opened.



## THE AMERICAN POLO PLAYERS.

**W**HAT are the prospects of the American players who, on June 21st, will

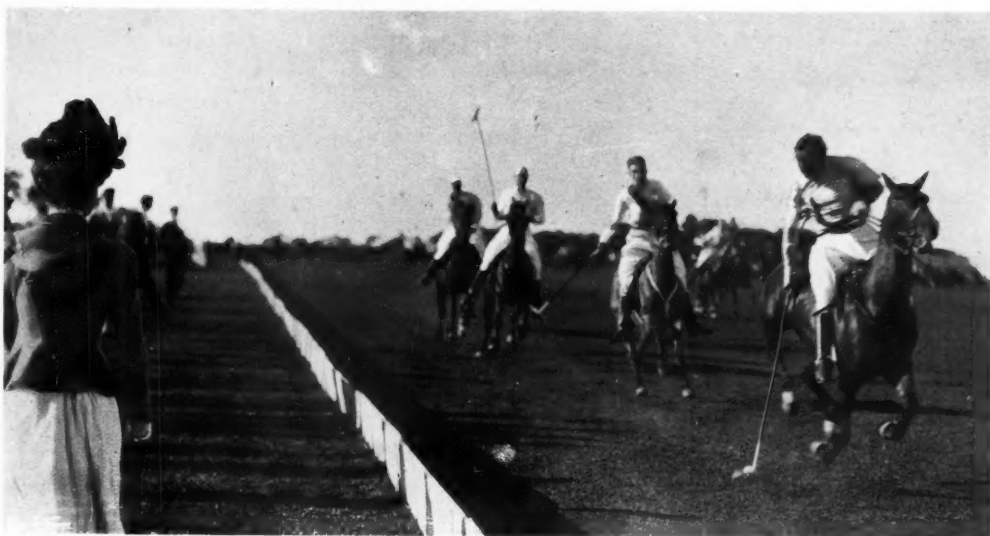
play against Hurlingham? Will they succeed in carrying back the cup which Mr. John Watson and his team, after a hard fight, brought over to England in 1886? In order to answer these questions I have endeavoured to collect first-hand information as to the players and ponies who are coming to England. Of the five men who are chosen to represent American polo, three have been in England already, and have played the game under English rules. First there is Mr. Foxhall Keene, who is as well known as any English player in first-class polo. He is a fine strong hitter and has the advantage of great natural gifts as a horseman, which have been improved by practice. When he first came to this country Mr. Keene played the dashing, rather independent game which is, or was, character-

istic of American polo. But a few matches at Hurlingham and Ranelagh and some careful watching of the Rugby team convinced him of the advantages of our combined play. In this style of play American polo players have made great advances of late. Mr. Keene plays at No. 3, the place which in modern polo is always assigned to the man who can use his head as well as his hands and is able to see when to go forward or to drop back. Next to Mr. Keene, American opinion seems to incline to Mr. L. Waterbury. This player added immensely to his reputation by

his play for Lakewood in the American Championship (1901). He is marvellously quick, and has a magnificent near-side back-

handed stroke. He plays right up in the game, and is fond of meeting the ball. This is a rather dangerous game on English grounds, but it is effective when a player has an accurate eye, and would be safer with Mr. Keene at No. 3 than under ordinary circumstances. Mr. R. L. Agassiz was originally a safe defensive back, but of late, like Captain Renton, he has done some excellent work at No. 2. Mr. Agassiz, however, is

considered in his own country to stand quite as high as, if not higher than, he ought in the American Association Handicap. Mr. Cowdin is another well-known American player who has not, perhaps, of late been quite up to his old form; but, on the other hand, he has played a great deal with Mr. Foxhall Keene, and these two understand each other's game very well indeed. Mr. J. M. Waterbury originally made a good reputation for himself as No. 1, but this year as No. 2 of the championship team he showed better form than he has ever done before, and this will very likely be his place if his brother, Mr. Laurence Waterbury, should be chosen to play back. The general opinion appears to be that there are two possible arrangements of the team—Mr. J. M. Waterbury (1), Mr. Laurence Waterbury (2), Mr. Foxhall Keene (3), and Mr. R. L. Agassiz (4); or, Mr. Cowdin (1), Mr. J. M. Waterbury (2), Mr. Keene (3), and



MR. COWDIN CARRYING THE BALL.



MR. FOXHALL KEENE GETS AWAY WITH THE BALL



AWAY FROM THE FIELD.

Mr. L. Waterbury (4). A good deal must depend upon the test matches, which will form one of the attractions of the earlier part of the season. So far we have viewed the players as the best judges among their own countrymen regard them. Now we have to consider the difficulties they will meet with in England. In the first place, there is a considerable difference between the rules of English and American polo. It is this difference which has caused the players of each country to develop a different style of play. Two very important English rules will be found wanting in the American code—the off-side rule and that which permits the crooking of the adversary's stick. There are other minor differences, but it is those I have named which are of most importance in actual play. The off-side rule has for its object to prevent the forwards hanging back in order to slip away with the ball, and one of its effects is to lessen the attacking power of No. 1 and to strengthen the defensive power of No. 4. This rule throws a great responsibility on the umpire,

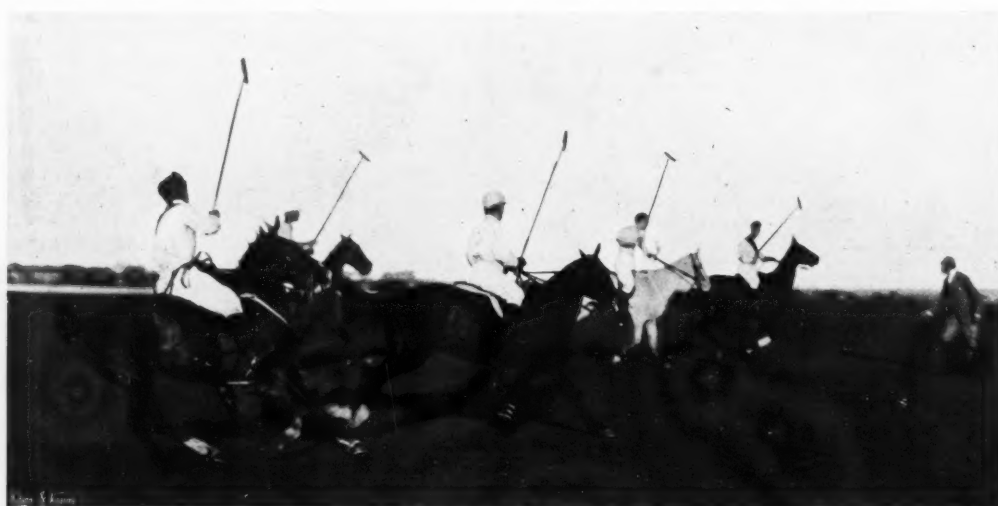


GETTING INTO THE SCRIMMAGE.

the very best of English players, and they are likely to find themselves confronted with a team which is their equal in every other point, and probably their superior in the fine art of passing the ball from one to the other without even giving the adversary a chance to strike at it. It will be here, if anywhere, that the habits of combination which first-class English polo teaches will give to our players an advantage.

In the last place, we have to consider the important question of ponies, and here I feel myself on less firm ground. The chosen American ponies I have not seen, but from the photographs which illustrate this article, and from those Americans I have seen and ridden, I incline to think that the balance of advantage on the whole may incline to them. American ponies are obviously—and here again I refer our readers to the illustrations—somewhat plainer and more angular than English ponies; but from its earliest youth the low pony is taught to be handy. Then the American course of training is far more systematic than ours. Although

we have improved in this matter, yet in the important element of school work our ponies do not yet receive nearly enough attention. It will, moreover, occur to everyone who knows the ponies playing in England, that not improbably there will be at least two American ponies among those of



PUTTING THE BALL INTO PLAY.

and there is some difference of opinion among umpires as to what constitutes "off side." One common effect, however, of the rule is to strengthen No. 4 and to enable him by the assistance of a quick wit and a handy pony to put No. 1 out of the game from time to time, and at all times to reduce the importance of that position. The permission to crook the adversary's mallet, which is the other important difference, is in practice a most valuable assistance to the defence. A promising run may be stopped in a moment, or, again, it may help the attack by interfering with a back-hander or a cut across that would have saved the goal. To play in a game with both these unfamiliar rules must be a disadvantage to the American players, and may possibly put them off their game. I do not think that we shall ever reconcile American players to "off-side"; but Mr. Foxhall Keene has in an interview in America expressed his strong approval of stick crooking as an improvement to the game. There is another point which has to be considered. The American players have to meet four of

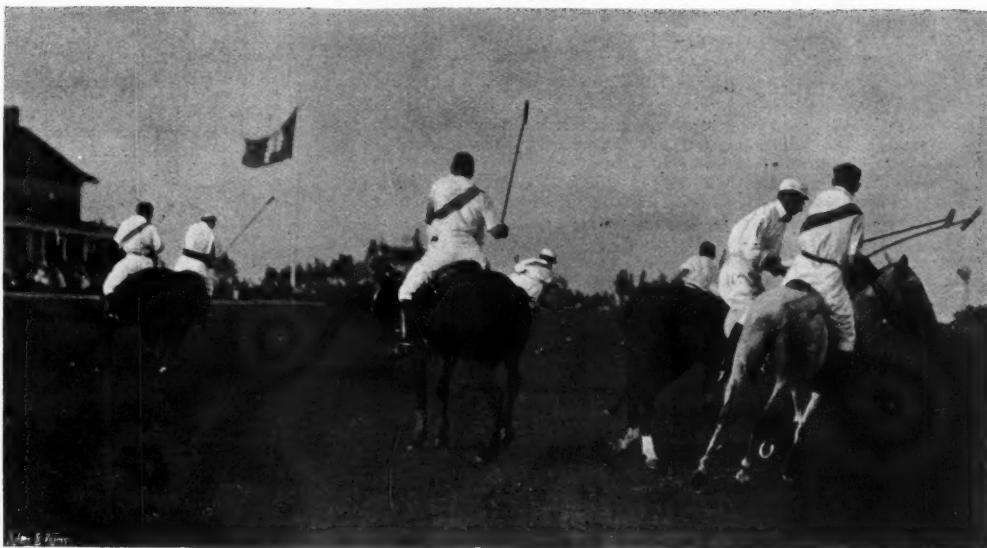


A FRESH GAME.



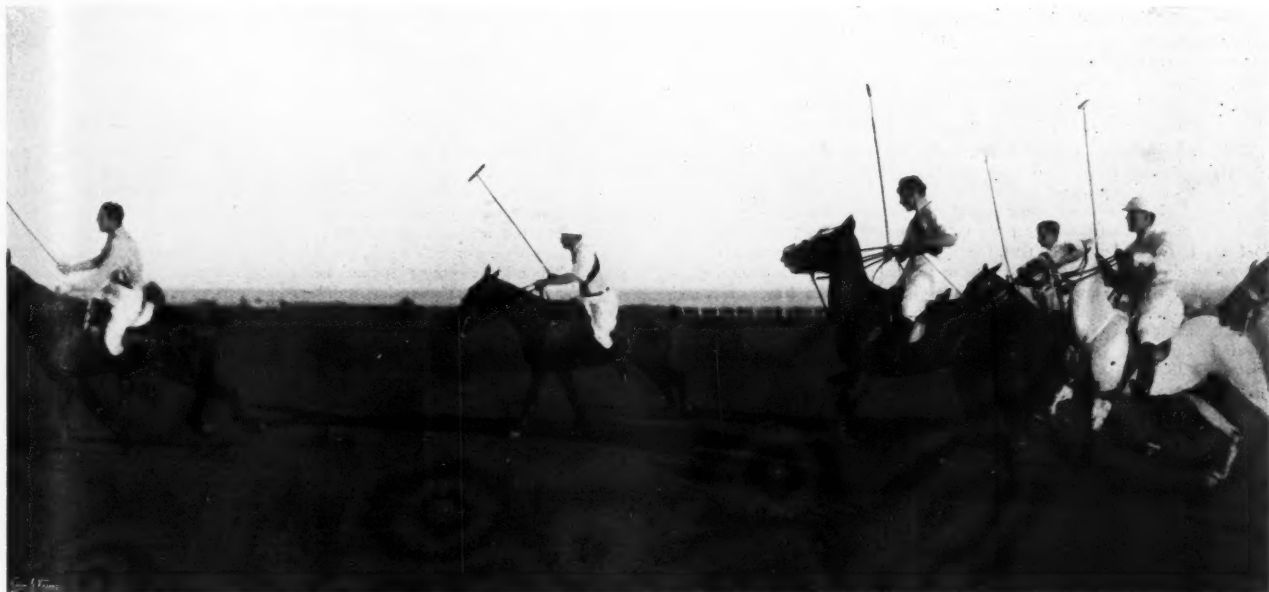
the English team. Among the ponies coming over are some well-tried animals, notably Mr. Agassiz' Cinders and Pink 'Un. Mr. Foxhall Keene will no doubt ride Texiana and Express. Mr. L. Waterbury brings three of Mr. George Gould's ponies, and Mr. Collin is lending three of the very best to Mr. J. M. Waterbury. There are twenty-six in the American string, and no doubt the English players will limit themselves to a similar number. They, too, will doubtless have the pick of the best ponies now playing.

It is sure to be a splendid game, and there will be a sharp struggle. Shall we forecast it? Prophecy is tempting, but dangerous. If we venture nothing we can achieve nothing. What will the readers of COUNTRY LIFE say to this? America will make a tremendous onslaught, attacking with great dash and force, will even press hardly at first, but failing in the end to break down the English defence, the tables will turn, and the English players will change defence into attack. Then as the American players tire a little we shall see our champion player shoot up into the game, sitting easily, and with the graceful turn of the wrist which looks so simple he will hit near and off side, while the good brown pony will



IN FULL PLAY.

more suitable localities. The green woodpeckers also left the coast-line, and the redwings totally disappeared. Last week, however (on January 30th), they reappeared in larger numbers than ever, again with strong, cold wind from the north-west; and at the present moment, the pastures flecked with snow half melted in the weak sunshine and half frozen in the cutting wind, they may be seen on every hand hopping all over the ground like the frogs in India when the monsoon has burst. In each of their arrivals and departures the redwings have been accompanied by large numbers of blackbirds and song-thrushes, whereas



AFTER THE BALL.

stretch himself away to the goal. What a shout arises! But that will be heard whatever the result of the match may be. Next to keeping the cup here, we should all cheer heartily if it recrossed the sea.

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### IRREGULAR MIGRATION.

THE movements of the redwings have been rather interesting and peculiar this winter. They arrived with a north-easterly wind on this part of the East Coast on October 12th, before we had seen quite the last of the departing house-martins. For three days they remained in considerable numbers and then disappeared, continuing their journey to the south and west. In the ordinary course their places should have been taken by later arrivals; but the winds were unfavourable for birds crossing the sea from the east, and for many weeks we saw nothing of the redwings until a number arrived on November 29th, this time with a strong north-westerly wind. The same wind brought green woodpeckers to unaccustomed haunts along the coast-line, immense numbers of golden plover, and some hawks. All of these birds had evidently travelled with the wind that swept from west to east across the middle of England, and were obliged to halt when they came to the coast. At the same time our flocks of peewits were doubled; and many little grebes and some green sandpipers found temporary refuge along the trout stream.

### TRAVELLING WITH THE WIND.

These, however, took the earliest opportunity of a change of wind and weather to depart again, traveling, no doubt, southwards and westwards to

the fieldfares and missel-thrushes have apparently remained stationary in their full numbers everywhere.

### THE STRONG AND THE WEAK.

Why should such nearly allied birds exhibit such contrasts in migration? Why should missel-thrushes and fieldfares remain on the North Norfolk coast with our resident song-thrushes and blackbirds, while the redwings, with a number of migratory song-thrushes and blackbirds, seem to drift backwards and forwards between east and west, though, no doubt, always making their way southwards? I think that the difference may be explained by the respective habits of the birds in the matter of food. Our resident blackbirds and thrushes have each taken possession of a small food-producing area—the corner of a garden or coppice, a strip of sheltered hedge, or the bank of a stream—whence they energetically hunt all intruders of their own species. So, when the ground hardens and a keen wind blows, the migratory song-thrushes and blackbirds go in follow-my-leader fashion across country in search of fresh pastures and better weather.

### THE REDWINGS' HARD CASE.

The missel-thrushes and fieldfares, on the other hand, remain with us no matter what the weather may be, because the frozen ground does not affect them in the same way. They take readily to a diet of berries, and, as there are still some hawthorn, with a fair stock of fruit untouched, and the ivy berries are blackening, they have still some reserves to fall back upon. But the redwings are not only the smallest and weakest of our thrush tribes, and, therefore, most generally hustled from places where food may still be found in frosty weather, but also seem unsuited to a diet of berries, except as a last resource. So they migrate to and fro, fleeing as far as possible before the cold winds of winter, whether these blow from the east or west of north. In many winters, of course, they are caught, for the fatal spell of frost is not always brought by a strong wind on which the redwings can escape. Then it is pitiful to see the straits to

which they are driven. Though among the shyest of birds, they will then come to your very doors almost begging for food, and crowd into the gardens of towns where stronger birds have not taken possession of all the berry trees.

#### AWAY FROM THE CROWS.

In early February the missel-thrushes think much less of defending their berry-bearing hollies or hawthorns, now almost depleted, than of mounting guard over some selected clump of trees in which they purpose to nest, and you may notice how, in districts where carrion crows or magpies are numerous, the missel-thrush often prefers to build close to human dwellings. It is for the same reason, no doubt, that such shy birds as rooks generally choose to establish their communal nurseries near a house in the country or even in the midst of towns and cities, remaining faithful even to a site where there is annual shooting of the young rooks. Much as the rooks fear man, they dread the carrion crow much more, for a pair of these black brigands will go through a whole rookery, devastating every nest, and it is only within the immediate range of human influence, where the carrion crow dare not venture, that the rooks' eggs and young are safe.

#### WHY SHOOTING PRESERVES ROOKERIES.

Thus there may be some foundation of scientific fact for the popular belief that rooks are likely to desert a rookery where the annual shooting of the young birds never takes place. For most people who shoot at all, if they own a rookery, invite their friends for one day's rook-shooting in the spring; and it would therefore follow that the places where the rooks are unmolested from year to year are often those where guns are never heard at any time. The wary carrion crow, hunted from pillar to post by men with guns, for the villainous egg-stealer that he is, learns to distinguish the limits of his zones of danger, and discovers that there are even some human dwellings which he can approach with safety. If to one of these a rookery happens to be attached, the owners discover one day that the rooks have deserted it, and when they seek the reason someone is sure to tell them that the rooks have gone because they were never shot—the real reason being that no birds, not even carrion crows, were ever shot.

#### THE HOODED THIEF.

Along the coasts where hooded crows are numerous in winter the missel-thrush would gain little by building near houses; for the hoodie has little fear of man. He is in fact much less shy than the rook, as you may see from the fact that nine out of ten scarecrows in the coast fields are made from dead hoodies instead of rooks. So the missel-thrush has a very bad time of it with his early nests in those parts where migratory hoodies abound, and you may find nest after nest with nothing but broken eggshells in it, in spite of the valiant defence which the missel-thrush is always ready to make against all comers. But the time soon arrives in spring when the hoodie has to think of nesting himself, and one morning when a warm west wind is blowing we come out to find that all the hooded crows have gone. Then the missel-thrushes have peace.

#### WHICH IS THE TYPE?

The rabbit probably departed from the hare type and acquired his digging powers through living in broken ground and thickets, where great speed would be of less use than a trick of sudden evanishment, and where the habit of scooping out hollows in the ground would easily lead to the digging of deep burrows of refuge against sudden surprises. On the other hand, it would seem at first sight equally possible that the hare should be an aberrant rabbit, having acquired great speed through living in the open, where he often has to race for his life. For the purpose of speed his legs would be lengthened, and he would thus become unfitted for scuttling down a burrow, and so would abandon the habit of digging. This, however, would be a reversal of the order in which Nature effects her changes, for she adapts the structure of living things to suit their surroundings and not *vice versa*. That is to say, Nature would not cause a burrowing animal to gradually acquire, for other purposes, such long legs that it would have to abandon the art of burrowing. On the

other hand, it would be perfectly natural, *i.e.*, in accordance with Nature's principles, for a variety of hare which adopted the practice of burrowing to acquire gradually shorter legs to suit its subterranean scuttlings. And if you look at a rabbit you will see that he is not built on the proper lines of a burrowing animal, but was originally a racer like the hare. The disproportionate size of his hind legs shows this. Therefore we may feel sure that his digging habits are a comparatively recent acquisition, and that the hare more nearly represents their common ancestor.

E. K. R.

## ON THE GREEN.

THE general meeting of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club shows that institution to be in the flourishing and opulent condition which is appropriate to the part it takes in initiating all good things, such as amateur championships and international matches. It actually has a balance to the good on the year's working, which is not to be said of all institutions in the past year of little grace. It has nearly 700 members, and it has Mr. Adam Rankine as its captain for the year. The golfer is a person hard to satisfy, but he cannot reasonably expect much more than this. What he might reasonably expect a little more agreeable is the weather that has prevailed for three or four days at the present moment of writing—a continuance of east wind of a severity that we do not often have to suffer from such a quarter. Add to this that the ground over most of the country has been iron-bound with frost, and it is evident that the time is not wholly favourable to good golf, but, on the other hand, is exceedingly favourable for the promotion of stories of record drives of anything between 300 yds. and 400 yds. These always flourish at a certain season when the ground is stony hard, so that the ball runs any distance on it, and the golfer has not much to do except stretch these distances as he discusses them at the club fire. With the aid of a frozen surface, a Haskell ball, and a little whisky, we ought to get some very long shots indeed. If the golfer were wisely migratory, he would be in the West of England at this season. There are links all round the south coast of Devon and Cornwall, and up again to Westward Ho itself, where the frost-bound condition is hardly known, and never is more than temporary. Mr. Osmund Scott, in spite of penalties, continues to win even handicap competitions at Westward Ho. He was round in gross 81 and nett 85 at the last monthly medal meeting—too good for any of the rest. At Ashdown Forest, on the same day, Mr. O. C. Bevan was winning the Yewhurst Clubs; but these are given for the best scratch score, and Mr. Bevan was not among the best of the nett scorers. It is one of the several blessings that the seaside course possesses over and above those of the inland greens, that frost seldom holds it long. If the golfer do not go to the West of England, he ought to go further, as to Pau or Biarritz, concerning which places all accounts agree that the weather and the golf have been all that is most delightful. But these accounts are previous to the recent visitations of east wind, which may have changed the aspect generally.

A good golfer gone is Mr. James Kirk, for long secretary of the St. Andrews' Thistle Golf Club, and belonging to a notable golfing family. He was only sixty-four years of age, and his death was sudden and wholly unexpected. Mr. Kirk several times entered for the amateur championship, but never quite got into the medal-winning heats. He was a type of the steady-going old St. Andrews golfer with whom the "sure" counted for more than the "far."

The railway companies continue to arouse themselves to the sense of what golf has done, and is capable of doing, for them. Following in the lines of the Great North of Scotland and its development of Cruden Bay, the London and North-Western is encouraging golf at Greenore by a professional tournament to be held at Whitsuntide on the course, which I understand is owned jointly by the Golf Club and the Company. In case anyone does not know it, Greenore is in County Louth, Ireland. Invited competitors have their fares paid.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

## "TIME PASSETH."

MY title is the sundial motto on the shabby little mouldering church at Somersby wherein Alfred Lord Tennyson used to say his prayers in boyhood, his father being rector. Nearly ten years have passed since I was there before, and what changes they have seen! At my previous visit Old Eppie, one of Tennyson's nurses, was still alive, a spare but cheery old body, who could laugh in spite of her load of years. How well do I remember her saying in her broad Lincolnshire, "Powet or no powet, I've carried him on my back, this many a time." There was the veteran, too, who had helped young Alfred with his arithmetic, and who could still walk his twenty miles a day, but complained that it made him tired now. In presence of those so much older than he it was difficult to realise that the laureate himself was old and ailing, and that his Gleam "drew to the valley, named of the Shadow." Yet it was fated that the great Victorian poet should not see the dawn of the new century or live under the new Sovereign. A decade is not a very long time, yet how



THE CHURCH AT SOMERSBY.





"... THE WELL-BELOVED PLACE  
WHERE FIRST WE GAZED UPON THE SKY."

clean it has swept the slate! The great poet died after singing his own noble requiem:

"Sunset and Evening Star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound or foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home."

And the home of his childhood is desolate. It no longer cherishes the name of Tennyson. Old Eppy and her contemporaries are fattening the village churchyard—the only flourishing institution of the neighbourhood—and change and decay have been hard at work on the hamlet. He once wrote of the place:

"Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall,  
And Averill Averill at the Rectory,"

and it was thought the idea sprang from the Burtons at the manor and the Tennysons at the parsonage. But the old squire is dead, the present incumbent of Somersby lives at Bag Enderby, and manor house and rectory both are held by small farmers. They are people who ought to command sympathy, because engaged in what has become the difficult art of extracting a livelihood from the soil. It is not a task highly conducive to the fostering of sentiment and the study of letters. Yet to me at least the sight of the place in its present condition was most painful. As it was before it furnished such a lesson in poetry as could nowhere else be found in England. Alfred Tennyson, the most refined, the most finished of English poets, grew out of Somersby, and was as natural to it as a stag is to a Highland strath. Nowhere was this more felt than in the rectory garden or on the lawn. What lover of "In Memoriam" but has peopled it with associations drawn from such exquisitely charming pictures as the following:

"O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

"O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn.

"Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon."

The Tennysons formed a delightfully

clever family, and when you saw the lawn as it used to be you could easily imagine "the time and the place and the loved ones together," and the conversation as brilliant as could be found in England. But now, alas, the once beautiful lawn is transformed into a kind of cabbage garden, much of the turf ruthlessly cut up by the spade and devoted to Brussels sprouts or some kindred vegetable. All about are chicken coops, rabbit hutches, wheelbarrows, and other stimulants to poetic imagination. A more complete transformation from the lawn of "In Memoriam" it would be impossible to imagine. The rectory itself carries more traces of decay than ever, chiefly, perhaps, because it is no longer kept up in the same style as before. Here, again, we fill it with ghost-like figures from the *Elegies*:

"With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
A rainy cloud possessed the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas Eve.

"At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all."

Close by the rectory stands the manor house, which seems to defy the encroaching years more successfully than anything else in the neighbourhood, thanks to the thoroughness with which Sir John Vanbrugh's designs were carried out in its erection. Inhabited now by a small dairy farmer, it does not at all answer to the poet's unrivalled picture of a deserted house, a picture that is equally remarkable for the fine description of wild life which has made it so freely quoted—a fact which shall not hinder it from being copied out once more:

"Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,  
And the broad woodland parcel'd into farms;  
And where the two contrived their daughter's good  
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,  
The hedgehog underneath the plantain bores,  
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there  
Follows the mouse, and all is open field."

It was scarcely possible for a dreamy boy to live beside this striking old building without weaving it into his fancy, and especially in the early poems allusions to granges of one kind and another are plentiful, the best-known being Mariana, the motto of which from "Measure for Measure" is "Mariana in the Moated Grange." Lord Tennyson was not addicted to making literal transcripts from life, but the famous description could



THE GREY OLD GRANGE.



DR. TENNYSON'S DINING-ROOM.

very easily have been suggested by this specimen of Sir John Vanbrugh's art.

"With blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted one and all;  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the peas to the gable-wall;  
The broken sheds looked sad and strange,  
Uplifted was the clinking latch,  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange."

Why the change is so regrettable is that no subsequent home of Tennyson's ever can have the same interest as Somersby. In Aldworth or in the Isle of Wight his character was completed and set. He loved the place where "the hoary channel tumbles a billow on chalk and sand," but it was not with the same ardent transforming passion that was inspired by the early home.

"We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
The roofs that heard our earliest cry  
Will shelter one of stranger race."

"We go—but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom."

"One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung,'"

"The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have strayed in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers;  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'"

It is easy to guess the part Somersby had played in his development from the fine ode over the family's departure from it. It was Lincolnshire scenery, the dry dark wold, the long grey field, the wide marsh, the pools with oat grass and sword grass and bulrush, the low sandy coast and the gentle, soft-flowing rivulets, that set its mark on the boy's mind and subsequently coloured his imagination, so that his most exquisite pictures are all of happy valleys and orchards and cornland. They are invariably suggestive of fertile English fields rather than of what is rugged and mountainous and stormy. In that way alone it is impossible to over-estimate the effect for good that Tennyson has exercised on his countrymen. Even the utter Philistine, who makes it a point to sneer at all poetry, has gained, indirectly if not directly, in refinement, in improved taste, in appreciation of the beautiful, from the very work he derides.

It is somewhat melancholy to think that never again will any ardent young student be able to see for himself and realise the surroundings of the greatest Victorian poet. He may go to Bemerton and find George Herbert's garden and house and church reverently cared for, and essentially now what they were 300 years ago. By a caprice of fortune decay in one case has done more in a decade than was accomplished in a century in the other. All the consolation is that Time itself wars in vain against Nature. The little brook still comes from haunt of coot and heron, still sings its way by meadow and hazel, past tiny thorpes, a little town, and half a hundred

bridges. Even the favourite wood still stands carpeted with snowdrops before winter is over and gone. The grey old grange is there, and the long folds by one of which Tennyson and Hallam discussed philosophy a live-long night; so are the low morass and whispering reed. You still may follow the sheepwalk up the wold, and climb the simple stiles, and on hoary knoll of ash and haw still "rarely pipes the mounted thrush." The dial above the church porch seems to-day and daily to be drawing a moral. "Time passeth," it says, and the mouldering church walls repeat it, and the time-worn cross gives it emphasis. On rectory and manor house and decaying hamlet might the same legend be engraved. Time passeth, and still the poet's gleam seems to rest on these fair lowlands. The present Lord Tennyson has told the world in the official biography that his father wrote "The Gleam" as autobiography. He tells us there how the inspiration of verse drew him on from subject to subject, from the idyls of the field to those other idylls that he always spelt with two "l's," those of tournament and adventure, but nothing in the whole poem is more vivid than that exquisite characterisation of Lincolnshire wherein he tells

that the gleam followed by him fell on the homely native scenery, on

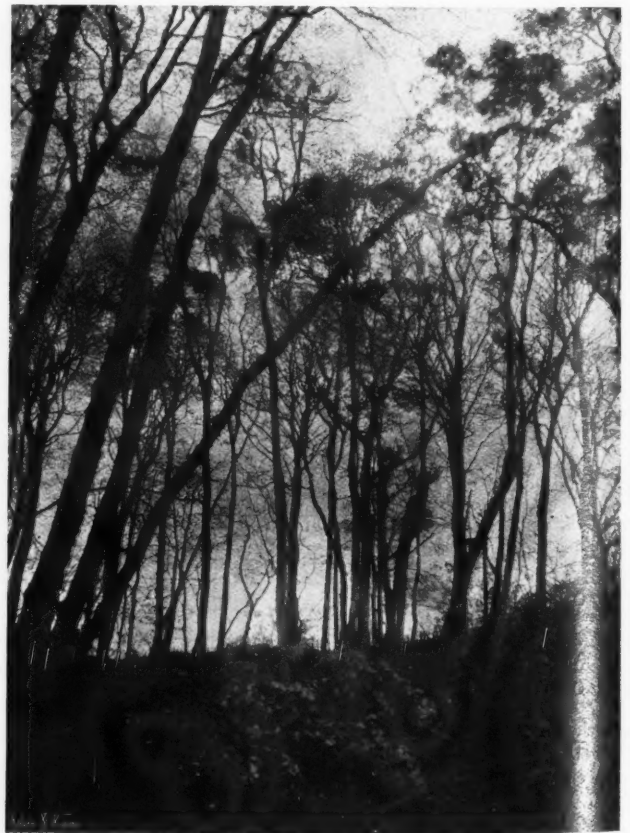
"Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Innocent maiden,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ready faces  
Of lowly labour."

P. A. G.

## IN THE GARDEN.

GROWING THE CUSHION IRISES.

NO doubt many readers of COUNTRY LIFE have tried to grow the exquisite Cushion or Oncocyclis Irises and failed woefully. But the mystery of their culture has been solved by the late Rev. Henry Ewbank, one of the most lovable of men, whose death we recorded last year. His paper in the last volume of the Royal Horticultural Society was one of his last contributions to



HOLYWOOD GLEN.

"THIS DELL, THE HAUNT OF MOONTIDE DEW."





### THE BROOK.

"BY TWENTY THORPES, A LITTLE TOWN,  
AND HALF A HUNDRED BRIDGES"

horticultural literature, and his advice is summed up in his own words as follows: "Good ordinary loam will do for them with a little sand if it be thoroughly impregnated with lime. My practice was as follows: It seemed to me that bone meal would be as good a food as any which I could get for my plants, and if they like lime at all they would respond to its use. I accordingly sent for a large sackful of it to Messrs. Clay, of Stratford, near London, and I distributed 112lb. of bone meal between four large frames, giving to each one 28lb. or thereabouts. These frames, I should say, are 12ft. long, 3ft. or 3½ft. wide, and have a depth of 1½ft. or 2ft. above 1ft. or more of drainage, over which inverted sods have been put. The bone meal was thoroughly mixed and incorporated with the loam which was put into the frames, and the Irises were planted in September last (1900) towards the end of the month, and now what is the condition of some three or four hundred Irises in the middle of March? So far as I know, they have got through the winter with the loss of only one or at most two plants. It is quite true to say that I have not noticed more than two 'miffy' plants, and instead of first one and then another 'going home,' according to gardeners' slang, in very mysterious ways, I have had no losses worth speaking of at all. This is an immense alteration, and an alteration for the better, from anything I have ever known before, and this is not the whole of the case. The plants look now, in the middle of March, in the rudest health, and are doing exceptionally well; the colour of the foliage is very good, and the outlook is as favourable as it could possibly be at this season of the year.

"The following amongst others are in my frames: *Iris Gatesii*, *I. Lortetii*, *I. susiana*, *I. bismarckiana*, *I. lupina*, *I. urmiensis*, *I. iberica*, etc.; and those about which at present success is least marked are *I. paradoxa* and *I. urmiensis*, but this may perhaps come from the fact that they naturally succeed the former, and a little time may show that they are all doing equally well. It should, perhaps, be said here that while so great an emphasis has been laid on the use of lime in the beds where they are growing, it is not meant at all that this can do away with all the other and ordinary precautions to which we have been accustomed until now. It is not right to say that lime is *per se* 'the secret of success,' but only that lime is indispensable to it if other things be right, and if it be wanting, no other measures, however good they may be, will do. To this extent, but no more, it is 'the secret of success.' Let other things, then, be duly remembered; they are, as it seems to me, very briefly, the following: (1) *Oncocyclus* Irises

are only likely to do well in a sunshiny place; a shady locality, or one overhung with trees, would not suit them at all. (2) They must have a shelter or covering over their heads in summer months, or else they will start off into growth much too soon and will not blossom the next year. (3) Drainage must be perfect; they would not endure to be waterlogged in any degree. (4) They like firm planting. I put boards over my beds and my gardener stamps upon them till the soil beneath becomes as hard as a rock. (5) The rhizomes should be lightly covered over—just enough to protect them from frost. (6) The borders should be kept very free of weeds or anything which can intercept the agency of the light. I believe that if these rules be attended to and the plants grown in soil which is impregnated with lime very good results may be expected to follow. One thing is certain, and that is that these *Oncocyclus* Irises hate to be disturbed. They send down their great thong-like roots deep into the soil and anchor themselves very firmly in it, and because of this it may also very confidently be said that what is called the 'taking-up system'—which implies that the plants should be taken up out of the ground and kept on a greenhouse shelf for a few weeks or months every year—cannot, from the very nature of the case, do so well as if they remained *in situ* and undisturbed.

"It is believed that no one in England has any adequate idea of what these Irises can really do, because they have been worried so much and treated after a fashion which they are prompt to resent. So far as I know *Oncocyclus* Irises have never yet remained in this country perfectly undisturbed for long years together, and only when this comes off shall we really understand what their surprising beauty is like. It is noticeable about them that when they do well they do very well indeed; it is all neck or nothing, so to say, on their part. Let us hope that their secrets are now sufficiently disclosed, and that, after many years of great trouble which they have given, they will now, at last, be quite contented with their lot, and will graciously and liberally reward us for our pains."

This is the result of years of patient study and experimenting, and we strongly advise anyone who has hitherto failed to follow the late Mr. Ewbank's treatment. We spent a happy day with him last year when the Irises were coming into bloom, the time indeed about which he writes, and can thoroughly endorse the remarks made. Horticulture lost a good friend when Mr. Ewbank left the world.

### SOME BEAUTIFUL WILLOWS.

In addition to the list given last week, we append the following:

*S. purpurea* (the Purple Willow).—This is so called on account of the bluish-tinted leaves. It is a European and Asiatic tree, erect and decumbent, and graceful at all seasons. The wood is also either red or purple in colour. There are two good varieties, one being *pendula* (the American Weeping Willow), an entirely misleading name, as the tree is not of American origin, but it is an ornamental Willow, and of distinctly weeping growth. In Loudon's "Arboretum," page 1490, it is written, "A native of Britain (between Thorpe and Norwich, etc.); flowering in March and April." In a wild state this species forms a shrub, with a stem 3ft. or 4ft. high, with long slender smooth branches, spreading widely, and if not supported trailing on the ground; very smooth, of a rich and shining purple, with a glaucous hue. The catkins appear earlier than the foliage, and often on different branches. In cultivation, in dug ground kept moist and the plants cut down yearly, this species produces shoots from 3ft. to 5ft. long, which are much esteemed for the finer sorts of basket-work. It is also frequently planted in Norfolk and Suffolk, and in some parts of Essex, for, according to "English Flora," page 2, "planting in to close low fences, for the exclusion of hares and rabbits, the bark and leaves being so extremely bitter that these animals will touch neither, whilst the shoots, being long, tough, and flexible, may be formed into any shape; and a fence of this kind is reckoned little inferior to that of wire." Besides the variety *pendula* mentioned above, there is also *schfenbergensis*, which is of more compact growth and has smaller leaves than the type.

*S. repens*.—A variable species with slender decumbent branches and small silvery leaves, which are quite soft and



R. N. Stead, MRS. R. COULTER & BABY. 178, Regent St.

silky to the touch. This is a native of Europe and Northern Asia. The variety *argentea*, or, to use its other name, *S. sericea pendula*, has silvery white leaves and is of round, compact growth. *S. rosmarinifolia* is the Rosemary-leaved Willow, a small branching shrub with slender, flexible twigs and linear leaves. It rarely grows more than 8ft. high, and is a most interesting species. In Hooker's Br. Pl. it is mentioned as a "Native of moist sandy or turfy places in Sweden, Germany, and the northern parts of Britain, flowering in April." Pursh, finding it, likewise, "in wet meadows and mountain swamps from Pennsylvania to Carolina," presumes that it has been imported thence into England.

*S. viminalis* is the Osier. This is a native of Russia and Northern Asia, but is grown largely throughout Europe for the production of Osiers for basket-making. It is found in wet meadows in this country, and flowers in April and May. As Loudon well says, "There is nothing peculiar in the culture of this species, or its varieties; but as it is a vigorous grower, those who cultivate it in quantities for basket-making or hoops generally, plant it in the best soil, intersected by watercourses, so that the roots may always have that element within their reach."

*S. vitellina* is the beautiful Golden Osier, which is of glorious winter colouring. There are two forms, one with clear yellow and the other with bright red stems, either of which makes a cloud of colour in winter. To get the richest effect it is necessary to cut the plants down every year just before growth

begins. Each colour must stand distinct, the two not mixed together. It is a native of English hedges. Loudon mentions its great importance for effect in his "Arboretum," page 1528, "As an ornamental tree *S. vitellina* is very striking in the winter season, especially among evergreens. As a shrub it is not less so, both among evergreen shrubs and deciduous kinds, having the bark of conspicuous colours."

It may be asked, "What are the best Willows to plant for the beauty of their catkins?" Those selected are the "Palm" *Salix Caprea*, *S. cinerea*, *S. c. medemii*, *S. gracilistyla*, *S. Migricans*, and *S. phylicifolia*. As catkins are borne on the older wood they cannot be looked for on shoots out down each year.

#### ELEAGNUS MICROPHYLLA.

"S. W. F." writes about this shrub as follows: "This *Eleagnus* deserves to be widely grown, since it blooms in November, a season of the year when nothing else in the outdoor garden is at its best. Its greenish white flower clusters are certainly not showy, but they possess the valuable quality of fragrance, which renders them acceptable both in the garden and in the house. The shrub grows to a height of 9ft. or 10ft., and its foliage, dark green on the upper side with white reverse, has a pleasing effect. Specimens grown in the open and not smothered up in a miscellaneous 'shrubby' bloom with surprising freedom, and are simply covered with blossom through the whole of November, while their perfume is apparent at a distance of some feet."

## THE FLIGHT OF THE SEAGULL.

THE experiments of M. Santos-Dumont have attracted fresh attention to the problems of flight. Now, a bird that cannot fly must always present itself to our view as an anomaly, for which, unless it be specially protected, there is no mercy and no alternative from the doom of an early extinction. In some few cases it may happen that a flightless bird has some other compensating mode of escape from its enemies. The flight of the penguin, for instance, is beneath contempt. I have seen scores of little penguins fling themselves from the ledges of outlying islets in the Bass Strait, near Tasmania, into the water beneath with no more grace in their aerial march than would be noticeable in a falling cat, but, once beneath the surface of the sea, penguins can out-swim many of the fishes themselves. The ostrich, again, is specially preserved for the sake of its feathers, for a more enlightened modern economy prefers farming the flightless giant to slaughtering it at sight. But the dodo and solitaire are gone, and who can doubt that the little kiwi will soon follow? Not the best energies of the New Zealand Government can avail to save that flightless fowl from the jaws of wandering cats and dogs, which respect no close time and pay no licence.

It must to the most casual observer be apparent that all birds do not fly alike. Men whose lives have in great measure been passed amid country surroundings often astonish the town-dweller by the facility with which they

can name distant birds by their flight when the species is otherwise indistinguishable; and even to the unpractised eye there are half-a-dozen widely different styles of flight in the skimming of the swallow, the rapid wing-beats of the starling overhead or the blackbird close to earth, the deliberate progress of the homing rook, the gliding of startled partridges, the hovering of the watchful kestrel, and the soaring of the singing skylark. We are for the moment concerned with a seventh, the flight of the gull, and a very fascinating spectacle is often afforded by gulls flying in either calm or stormy weather, winging their way seawards in the sunset of summer evenings to roost upon the deep, wheeling over the uplands in search of food turned up by the plough when all is chaos on their native shore, or scurrying round the fishermen's nets in little Cornish harbours when the decks are being cleaned of the silvery scales and there are perquisites that escape the eye of the fish-buyer. Judging, too, from the extent to which, both pictorially and in the text, Professor Marey cites the *goéland* in his standard work on "Le Vol des Oiseaux" (1900), gulls are of considerable importance in illustrating the typical problems of bird locomotion. Excellent, however, as are some of the figures published by the eminent French physiologist as scientific diagrams obtained with the aid of his ingenious "gun-camera," they fall, in point of artistic beauty, far short of the photographs which are my text.



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HOVERING AND DIVING.

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## QUESTING FOR FOOD.

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True flight, as seen in birds and bats—it is even to be differentiated from the flight of insects, though the distinction need not here be pressed—is quite different from the “flight” of some mammals, fishes, and molluscs. There are “flying” squirrels, flying fish, and flying squid; but the action of the first-named is that of a parachute, since they can fly downwards only, and that of the others may perhaps be likened to those small paper darts with which the naughty little boy at school takes careful aim at the near eye of a neighbouring good little boy, confident that if his eye is, as it should be, on the book, his missile can do no mischief.

In the flight of a bird three chief principles would seem to be involved. We have to take account of the size and form of the wing, of the size and form of the bird, and of the muscular power which moves the wing, the last-named to be considered in connection with all manner of external forces that it has to overcome. Nature, superior to any Herreshoff, has designed her living yachts and adjusted her sail area with a perfection of resource that we can envy and admire, but strive in vain to reproduce. It may be that man will invent the serviceable flying machine, but he will never in all probability solve the problems of bird flight. True, Nature had not to take account of that “skin-friction” which is of such moment to the yacht designer, for the dynamics of birds involve no such factor. When, for instance, we see a gull sitting on the water and making progress, we see that the wings are folded back over the tail, and, by inference, we know that the movement is imparted by the paddling of the webbed feet. The bird parallel of a yacht in motion would be furnished by a gull sitting on the water and spreading its wings to a favouring breeze. Such an apparition would

assuredly convince me that I had lunched too well; but if a further instalment of Mr. Wells's ingenious “Anticipations” should take him into the promising realm of the sophisticated, educated beasts and birds of the future, I make him a present of the idea, for, being concerned only with the gull as it is, I have no use for it. The penguin or cormorant, again, has more analogy with the mechanics of the submarine, so that the sailing boat has no parallel among water-fowl, though there are both fishes and molluscs that have been thought in a measure to move on the same principle.

Nor is the shape of the bird a negligible factor in its flight. If we drop an open sheet of newspaper from a first floor window on a calm day, and if we then drop the second sheet crumpled up in a ball, anyone knows that the second will reach the earth first and at a point more immediately beneath the starting



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## A CHOICE MORSEL.

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point. A hawk sailing down wind and anon folding its wings close to its body and pitching on the ground, approximately illustrates the two conditions.

In the majority of swift-flying birds we find the body thickest at the middle, or, at any rate, under the wings, and tapering towards both head and tail, and this is the principle of design in both swift fishes and racing yachts. The sunfish (which the French call the "moonfish") was no more built for speed by Nature than the Devon clay-larges by man, and if there is a parallel in the bird world it must be sought among the vultures. They have no need to hurry; they have no enemies to escape; they never pursue living food. Talking of the parallel between animals and boats, an old writer of the seventeenth century, one Broellus, gives, in his "*De Motu Animalium*," a somewhat ingenious comparison between the four methods of propelling a boat and the four typical modes of animal motion. The action of the bargeman's pole, for instance, he likens to the walking of mammals; the pull of the boathook to the creeping of reptiles; the sweep of the oars to the swimming of fishes; and the filling of the sail to the flight of birds. This is in parts a trifle far-fetched, but its ingenuity has, on the whole, borne the scrutiny of a less sophisticated generation than that for which it was written.

The obsolete theory which is ascribed to the quills the power of generating hydrogen, or some such buoyant gas, thereby making the bird at best an indifferent imitation of the airship of M. Santos-Dumont, ignored the true marvel of bird flight. If we reject this wholly fictitious chemical aid, we can still admire the perfect equilibrium. Gulls hovering about a pier or vessel give a wonderful impression of balance, the legs hanging just from the right spot, and the internal ballast being no doubt adjusted with a like regard for economy of effort. A gull hovering, for instance, over a fish expends far less effort than a kestrel hovering over a mouse, and I have often thought (though the suggestion is offered only for what it may be worth) that it is sheer fatigue after those vibrant wing-beats which brings the kestrel to earth even when the prey is gone, and not any misplaced certainty of getting a meal. The gliding of a covey of partridges over a hedge is done on the strength of



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#### SEAGULLS ON THE WING.

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impetus acquired by quick preparatory wing-beats, close to the ground, and on quite still days. Grouse glide in a precisely analogous manner over the butts, and I have been told up in the North that this is when the birds are badly hit, yet not badly enough to stop them. In the absence of other evidence to the same effect in the case of the many grouse that have gone past my own butt, I gladly accept this explanation.

The seagull shows no flight comparable to any of these instances. Its evolutions in the air command our admiration most in windy weather, and when, by the way, we see the gulls ringing and soaring at a great altitude on perfectly still evenings in summer, we must remember that there may be a good deal more wind at those heights than at sea level. In fine summer weather, with no tell-tale clouds to show the force of a wind on high, it is often particularly hard to realise this. If we watch a gull rise from the water, we soon note a rapid change in the wing action. On first leaving the water, the wings flap quickly and move through a considerable angle; then, apparently of a sudden, though the transition is probably more gradual than the naked eye can appreciate, they flap quite slowly and through a much smaller arc. The sight of gulls flying in the eye of a gale, going in grand ringing curves, always tempts me to forget the dry algebraic formulæ, the book mechanics of twisted wings, the coefficient of resistance of the air regarded as the fulcrum on

which the wing-lever works. A shot-gun in the hands of a yokel would lay the bird low in an instant of time, but not all the brains of all the mechanicians, not all the studies of all the physiologists, have quite satisfactorily accounted for the movements of a bird's wing. Less remote in all probability is man's mastery of the air, in so far as that mastery may be won with some form of navigable flying machine. Yet between its successful manufacture and the understanding of the simpler, yet more effective, flight of the common sparrow, what a gap! To the utilitarian, anxious only to make and break new records, to conquer time and annihilate space, to go faster and faster about his daily pleasure and his daily business, the railway train, the submarine, and the air-ship will have been successive stages in a triumph that fills his highest ideals. To the more humble, more peaceful naturalist, the wing muscles of the tiniest wren or humming-bird are the embodiment of a triumph that no work of man can compare with. His religion is written in birds' wings and in the colours of butterflies, but it brings down consolations. F. G. A. O. L.

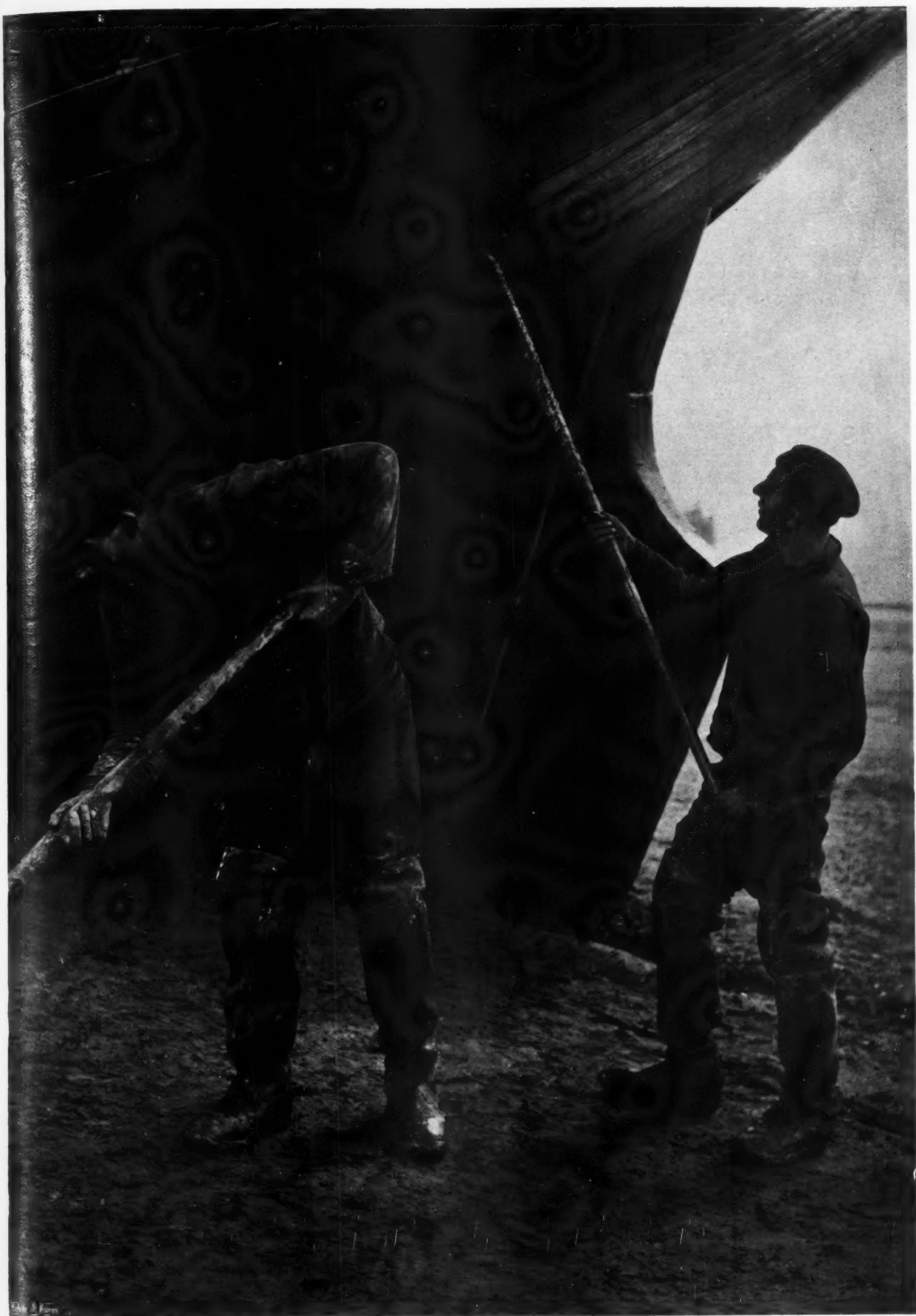


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#### OVER THE RIPPLING SEA.

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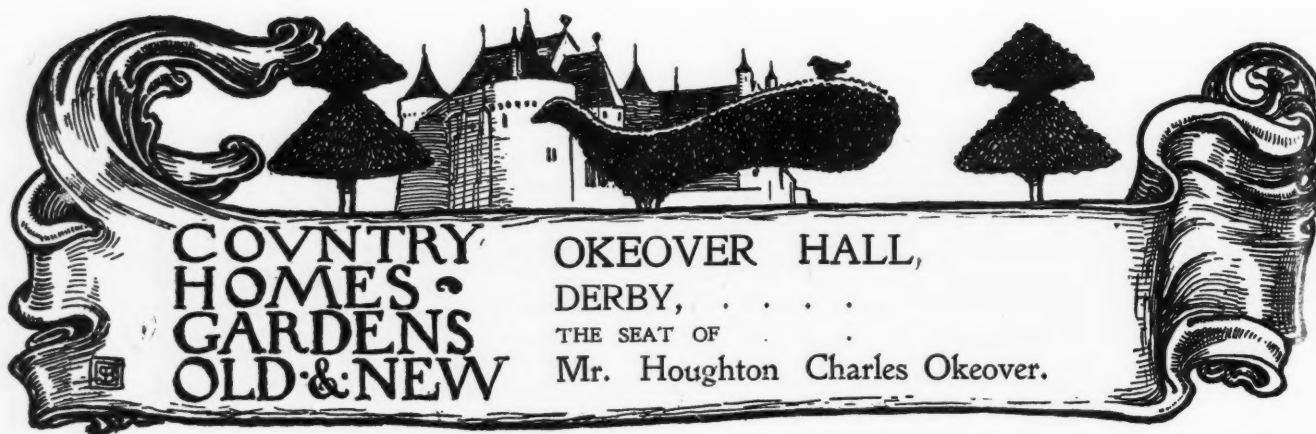




M. Emil Frechon.

PITCH AND TAR.

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WITHIN two miles of the pleasant town of Ashbourne—where Prince Charles Edward, amid his handful of Highlanders, was proclaimed King of England in the market-place on December 4th, 1745—stands Okeover Hall, a house which has many claims upon the regard of Englishmen. Though its modest exterior may not speak loudly of history, there has been seated here, from days shortly after the Conquest, a family which is still represented by a direct descendant of the original grantee.

Here we have one of those demesnes in which long-lineaged gentlemen have exemplified and maintained in succeeding ages the character and traditions of Englishmen. Then we must not forget that Okeover is in the valley of the famous Dove, and within a short distance of the very opening of the romantic gorge of Dovedale, ever to be associated with the "Compleat Angler." It was a region remote from some of the storms and broils of civil strife, where Walton and Cotton could ply their gentle art even when the agonies of the Civil War shook all the country beside. "Viator" asked genially of "Piscator" if they had any churches in the country thereabout, which fact being demonstrated, he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Why, if you will not be angry, I'll tell you—I thought myself a stage or two beyond Christendom." The vale is

filled with memories of Izaak Walton, who, by the water of Dove,

"beguiled

With his adopted son the hours away,  
Whilst Cotton owned the fondness of a child  
For him, in whose glad company to stay  
Had made the whole year pass like one sweet month of May."

It would be easy to use superlatives in speaking of this glorious region of Middle England, and much might be said of the marvels of that romantic cleft in the limestone, where columnar crags and hoary scarps, festooned and clothed with clinging verdure, margin the narrow way by the stream.

But it is time for us to betake ourselves to the object of our quest, which is on the Staffordshire side of the Dale, where the Dove has already issued from the gorge, and has received the kindred waters of the Manyfold ere it passes by Mappleton to Ashbourne. Mappleton is a picturesque village in Derbyshire, immediately opposite to Okeover, whose glorious park extends towards the river. The Okeover demesne was granted between the years 1096 and 1113, by Nigel, Abbot of Burton, to Ormus de Acovere, and has been in the possession of the Okeover family from those days to these. The present possessor, Mr. Haughton Charles Okeover, direct descendant of the original Ormus, has held the property for sixty-three years, and has added the greater part of the south front to the mansion, the east and north fronts







"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE OLD SUMMER-HOUSE.

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THE SUNK GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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FIR TREE WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



being of the time of Queen Anne. The manor house wherein lived the old Okeovers had disappeared in the course of ages. It was a moated dwelling, which stood on the site of the present mansion for some centuries; and upon an eminence in the park, about a quarter of a mile away, are still evidences of a fortified building of earlier date, surrounded by a moat, crossed by a stone arch in good preservation.

The park is very beautifully timbered and of undulating character, and is famous for its oak trees, of which some are of enormous girth and unascertained age. That they go back to the time of Ormus de Acovere we will not assert, but their venerable aspect and glorious proportions bespeak very high antiquity. The oaks certainly gave name to the place, whose designation signifies an "over" against a river-side or valley where oaks grew. Some physical characteristic nearly always gave name to a place, and from the place, as in this instance, the family derived its patronymic. The ancient records of Okeover show that there has been from the earliest times a deer park there. It is related that in the turbulent days of the Wars of the Roses Okeover was repeatedly attacked by the members of another faction. Philip Oker (a form sometimes used for Okeover), presenting a petition to Parliament, asserted that grievous damage had been done to his estate, for which "he and his ancestres of tyme that no mind was to the contrary," had possessed the manor of Oker, with the park thereto adjoining. He claimed damages



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THE SOUTHERN WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

from William Cockayne, Gentleman, and from Thurston Vernon of Haddon, and about 100 others, who had attacked his manor and park, "arraied with jackes, salletes, helmets, sperys, bowes, and arrowes, and with other wepens of offense in waye of warre and riotsnes." They had broken the doors and windows of the house, and, having wreaked their spite upon the structure, had hunted all day in the park, breaking down the pales thereof, and killing all the deer save five, and, as if to add insult to injury,



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STAIRWAY OF THE SOUTH TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE HALL AND CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

had roasted their venison at a fire kindled with furniture from the house of their enemy. What a picture does this give us of the days when civil broils set men against their neighbours, for the Cockaynes of Ashbourne Hall were men of note in the county, and none can gainsay the gentility of the old Vernons of Haddon.

The name of Okeover was very variously spelt in early times, but about the reign of Queen Elizabeth its orthography became settled. An interesting document of the period gives us another picture of the life of old Englishmen. Philip Okeover, with a spirit which happily exists in these days also, contributed £50 towards the fleet equipped to resist the Spaniards in 1588, but there is an interesting letter addressed to him by Queen Elizabeth which belongs to those times only. His sole daughter had married Sir Anthony Ashley, ancestor of the present line of the Ashleys, Earls of Shaftesbury, and Philip Okeover in relation thereto had stood in fear of the Queen's anger. She therefore wrote to him: "We hear that in sore displeasure you have disinherited your only daughter, married to Sir Anthony Ashley, Clerk of the Council, drawn thereto by doubting that We, being offended with him, would ruin his estate, but as this is not the case, We wish to prove our displeasure is not vehement, and that our clemency is much

more abounding We can be content to promote his good. We wish you not to divert from your daughter those monuments of love which parents do not without great cause divert from their children. We have overcome greater offences, and may hereafter so favour him that you would rather wish to give more than abate anything. We will take your compliance as an argument of dutiful regard." Here we seem to obtain some new light upon the character of Queen Elizabeth. We see, at any rate, that with a generosity which was not quite common with her, she could intervene upon occasion to procure the individual welfare of her subjects.

The Okeovers became possessed by marriage of large properties in Norfolk, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire, but all these have now passed from the family, the latter only in recent years. Many members of the family have filled offices of honour and

trust locally and in the service of their country. Sir Richard Oker, who married a daughter of Lord Grey de Ruthin, was Vice-Admiral to Richard II., and represented the county of Derby in the fifth and fifteenth Parliaments of his reign, while Thomas de Oker was a Member of Parliament in the days of Henry IV. and Henry V. Sir Philip Oker, *et.*, was High Sheriff of Derby and Nottingham in 1465, and Humphrey Oker of the county of Derby in 1471. In earlier times



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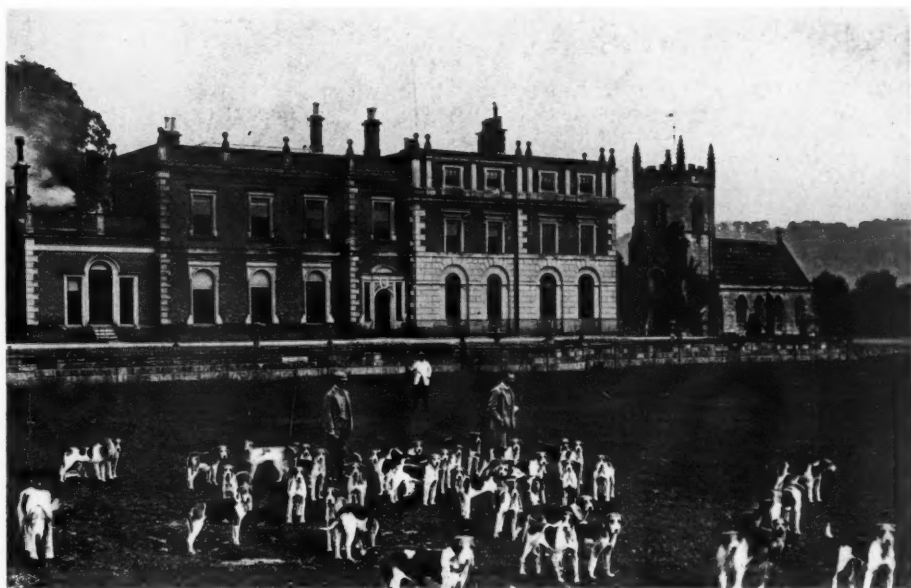
OLD GARDEN GATES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



a Sir Hugh de Acovere had been sheriff of Stafford and Salop in the reign of Henry III.

We shall give but one other out of the many historical memories of Okeover Hall. The visit of Prince Charles Edward to Ashbourne has already been alluded to. Some of his followers were of a turbulent class, and paid a predatory visit to the house, and the chaplain then in residence described what happened in a letter to Mr. Luke Okeover. As the troopers returned from Derby, they came one evening to the house at seven o'clock wanting armour, and they plundered the mansion, with its stables and barns, as well as the church, and the chaplain said: "They have taken your best saddle trimmed with gold lace, and furniture belonging to it, and your lady's biddle, and two other saddles and two other bridles, and two pair of boots, and upon Tuesday the young mare, and upon Saturday the grey pad, and they have taken all your horses at Okeover." Their plundering did not stop even at this, for they took eighteenpence from the good chaplain's pocket, besides picking the pockets of the servants, and the chaplain's silver tobacco-box vanished. There was a little comfort in the



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THE PACK IN FRONT OF THE HALL. "COUNTRY LIFE."

the extraordinary richness of the old ironwork. The piers, urns, and gates are of great beauty, and are extremely fine examples of the craftsman's skill, and the gate by which access is gained to the house and church deserves to rank very high among such works. It will be observed that the old stonework is also particularly noteworthy. A most pleasant vista is that seen from the ascent to the stone summer-house, although the caps to the stairs seem a little meaningless in that position. But we must leave our readers to discover from the pictures the interests and charms of this old stone and iron work. The gardens are laid out in terraces, and combine both the character of cultivation and that of natural wildness, the "dressed" portion of the grounds merging almost imperceptibly into the woods which adjoin them, up a lovely glen with a stream and a series of fish-ponds. Firs of every description abound, and Mr. Okeover has added many rare specimens. The variety of foliage is one of the great charms of the place, and the gardens partake of the variety which characterises the region of the River Dove.

The church is a donative in the gift of Mr. Okeover. There is nothing uncommon in a sacred edifice standing in the close neighbourhood of the residence of the landed proprietor, as readers of this series of articles may have observed. The church at Okeover has some very interesting memorials,



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THE TERRACE AND CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

chaplain's cup of bitterness, for he graphically added, "They killed none of us, but threatened us much."

The house contains some beautiful tapestry and a fine collection of pictures, including several works of Rubens, Titian, and Vandvck, with two large Van der Velde, "The Calm" and "The Storm." Perhaps the gem of the collection is a large work by Raphael, "The Holy Family," which tradition says was made into a shutter during the Civil Wars to preserve it from the rage of the Puritans, and was found some years afterwards, thus disguised, among old lumber.

The gardens at Okeover were of note more than 200 years ago, for old Plott, in his "History of Staffordshire," in 1669, says, after giving an account of the gardens at Ingestre and other principal places in the county: "I think the greatest variety of all kinds of fruit is to be found in the gardens of Okeover, where there are now growing sixty different sorts of apples, twenty sorts of pears, sixteen sorts of cherries, thirty-five sorts of apricots and other plums, and seven sorts of nectarines and peaches." The gardens were, indeed, in those and subsequent times in excellent hands, as we may see by



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THE DUCK POND.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and among them one of Humphrey Oker and his wife, with thirteen children, 1538, which brass was stolen by the workmen with unholy hands when the church was restored by Sir Gilbert Scott. Fortunately, a part of it was recovered.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, who visited his old friend Dr. John Taylor at Ashbourne in 1772, 1775, and 1777, being conveyed in "an equipage, properly suited for a wealthy beneficed clergyman," describes Okeover church in his diary. Since his time, in Sir Gilbert Scott's hands, it has assumed a more beautiful character.

It is curious to note that, in spite of the great antiquity of the Okeover family, there are no other representatives of it to bear the name existing; and, though on several occasions it has been reduced to only one or two members, the descent has always been preserved through the male line since Elizabeth's reign. Mr. Okeover has only one son, and, in default of his succeeding, his daughters in succession will bear the name and arms of Okeover.

And now, before we forsake Okeover Hall, let us pay a tribute, in the words of Charles Cotton, to the silver Dove, which pursues a placid course by the park.

"Such stream Rome's yellow Tiber cannot show;  
The Iberian Tagus, or Ligurian Po,  
The Maese, the Danube, and the Rhine,  
Are puddle-water all compared to thine;  
And Loire's pure streams yet too polluted are  
With thine much purer to compare;  
The rapid Garonne and the winding Seine  
Are both too mean,  
Beloved Dove, with thee  
To vie priority;  
Nay, Thame and Isis, when conjoined, submit,  
And lay their trophies at thy silver feet."

This is the fine enthusiasm of the old angler for the pellucid waters of the stream he loved so well, and with these lines we shall not inappropriately conclude our description of the interests and charms of Okeover Hall.

## BEATER SHOOTING.

HAVE you ever shot in the champagne district? The shooting is not to be despised. There is a plenty and a variety of game, that includes both roe and pig. That which is spoken of familiarly as pig is really the noble wild boar. Then the company of shooters has names that in themselves are like the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land—Mumm, Bollinger, and the rest of them. We



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THE WILD GARDEN IN FIR PLANTATION. "COUNTRY LIFE."

were posted in line, and the pheasants, partridges (red-legs), hares, rabbits, roe, and so on came on through the forest before the beaters. At length appeared the unfamiliar sight, to me, of a small wild pig. It dashed close past the gun on my left, without his seeing it, so close to him that I dared not shoot. When the beat was done I said to him that it was a pity he had not seen the pig. "But why did you not shoot if you saw it?" he asked (we had our left barrels charged with ball on purpose for pig). "I could not," I said; "it was too near you." "Oh!" he replied, "that does not matter; you must always shoot when you see a pig, no matter how near it is." His practice, I found later, conformed to his theory, for the next beat a pig came crashing through the brambles beside me, and its crash (I could barely see the animal itself) was accompanied, just as it came between myself and my friend on the left, by a discharge of his gun and a rattle of the ball among the underwood at my feet. I was quite pleased that we only saw one more pig that day, a very small one, which I shot with my right barrel, shot-charged; and that being the sole porcine thing slain on that day's shooting, I found myself a hero by virtue of killing this poor infant suckling. It appeared much like babycide.

In France, as it appears to me, they take their shooting from a different standpoint from ours. (I speak, I admit, of a limited acquaintance with French shooting. I have no wish to pose as an authority, and speak of that only which I have seen.) They seem to regard it as a sport that essentially has an element of danger. There is the chance of being shot. They accept that frankly, just as we accept the element of risk in polo or hunting, and they engage in the sport on that understanding. Therefore, if any gun shoots near others that is all in the day's work. Perhaps, after all, we do wrong to regard our attitude towards the sport as the normal one. It is *de rigueur* with us that we shall not shoot down the line, or otherwise imperil the lives of the other guns. But that is not the case in any other shooting parties, save those of British sportsmen and of British sportsmen of a certain class. When the tenant farmers are given a day's rabbit shooting, the shots fly about among the guns with a wonderful impartiality, and only the analogy of the ammunition expended in the Boer War in proportion to its casualties can help us to understand how it is that tenant farmers continue as numerous as they are after such shoots. The Frenchman, I think, has a certain scorn of the man who does not accept his view of the risks of a shooting party, and endure the results with a valiant spirit. A Frenchman, shooting in England with a party of what we deem normal British sportsmen, peppered a beater. "I say," says one of the party to him (and it always is well to get this kind of thing said first,



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OKEOVER: EXIT OF ROSE GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



for fear anyone else shall say it of you), "I say, you've shot one of the beaters!" "Mon Dieu! Shot a beater! Bring me the man; let me see him!" The fellow, who had yelled like a pig, was brought up, still bewailing. He pointed to a single pellet-hole in his cheek, from which the blood was welling richly. The Frenchman looked at him surprised. "That!" he said, scornfully. "Is that all? Vy, you are one coward!" This was by no means the attitude that any of the party, least of all the sufferer himself, had expected the inflicter of the injury to take up about it. And when it was put in this way it was evident at once that there was something in it. We should not wish to have many shooters of this stamp among our parties, nor should we like the view of this gallant Gaul to become prevalent. But, after all, what he said was quite true. The man was a coward to make all the fuss he did about his injury. He was far more frightened than hurt.

If the view of this Frenchman were to prevail, there is no doubt that the risks of shooting would much increase, and, in the judgment of most of us, they are sufficient as they stand. For the guns there is a certain danger, and for the beaters there is a good deal more. Yet I am not at all sure that the beaters themselves do not take something of the French view of the sport. I am not sure that they do not like a little of the added excitement that free shooting brings (it always is to be remembered that themselves are akin to the franc-tireurs, if that means free shooting tenant farmers). An old beater was heard to say, speaking of a certain shot noted for shooting without any exaggerated value placed on human life, "I do like beating to that Mr. X.; he do shoot so wonderful close. Why, the other day he shot the stick as I had in my hand right in two, and never hit me!" The old fellow was as pleased as Punch about it.

This was the shooter of whom it is told that he was heard to holla, as the rabbits were dodging back among the beaters, "Straddle your legs apart, man, straddle your legs, so that I can shoot them as they go between." They did not even always resent it when he went a shade too close. "Oh, lor! Master's got me again," his keeper was heard to exclaim as he came out of the covert, wringing his hands with pain. But he took it all good-humouredly, as being in the day's work. No doubt "Master" made it up to him financially.

There is an old Forfarshire story that may have found its way into print for all I know, though I have not seen it printed. When the beaters came out of the covert, one of the guns said to the keeper, "Have you got all your beaters out?" "Aye," said the man, astonished. "Are you sure; have you counted them?" "Counted them?" He threw his eye over them in a rapid reckoning. "Aye," he said, "they're all right." "Then," said the shooter, with a sigh of some relief, "then I have shot a roe!" That is a nice tale. I like one recently narrated to me, again of a French shoot, and illustrative of the French idea. My informant was posted next to a Frenchman, who, as the beating line came very close, took a steady aim into the covert at some ground game, and fired. The discharge was followed by a shout—not of pain, but of some excitement—"Attention! Plomb!" as who should say, "Mark! Lead!" The "Attention! Plomb!" was taken up and repeated down the line, I hardly know with what meaning, unless it were a piece of delicate Gallic humour, for however much the poor beater might "Mark! Lead!" he hardly could have had time to skip out of its way as it came along. But I like the story and also the spirit that it shows of the French beaters not resenting at all the shower of lead coming among them.

Within my own experience I have found that most distressful of all forms of so-called sport, a blue hare drive, enlivened by an incident that seemed for the moment brimful of excitement. On the crest of the hill, whither the foolish hares came lolling up, I was stationed behind a cairn, with another gun disposed behind a peat hag on my left. Beyond him was another gun again over the skyline from my station. The gunner on my left fired at a hare crossing him on the far side from me, and a moment later I heard a shouting from the gun beyond, and perceived the gunner who had fired last making tracks down the hill at best speed towards me. In another moment I saw that he was pursued by the shooter who had been stationed on his left, and the latter had his gun up to his shoulder as he ran, and held it levelled at my friend, who proved himself more friendly than I cared for under the circumstances, since he ran to protect himself from the outrage which seemed impending, by coming to cover behind my own person. Still with his gun levelled unpleasantly, his pursuer approached, abusing my protégé at every step he took; and presently the case was explained. In shooting at the hare, this friend who fled to

me as to a city of refuge, had shot the hand of the gillie who was giving some cartridges to the gun on his left. This shooter, being of a choleric mood, hotly resented the injury to his henchman. "By Jove!" said he, "it is lucky you shot my gillie and not me, for if you had hit me I swear to heaven I would have put two barrels into you." This attitude is at the opposite extreme from that of the beater who appreciated the shooting of his stick in two. I think the ideal attitude, as usual, is in the mean. But the spectacle of the one gun pursued over the hilltop by the other with his piece levelled was enough to make even a blue hare laugh, and surely they have not much sense of humour.

On the whole, there certainly is insular prejudice in Great Britain against treating the beater as a beast of venery. Of course it is not as discreditable to shoot a beater as to shoot a fox, but neither is to be looked on as fair game for the gun, and one has to be very chary of retailing any stories touching upon it in a mixed company. *En route* from Liverpool Street to Norfolk I once entertained the carriage full, of whom all but one were well known to me, with a tale of a man firing at a rabbit that was running up a bank, and peppering a little knot of beaters who had just come out of the covert. They were congratulating themselves that none of them were badly hurt, when the sportsman discharged his second barrel at the rabbit, and peppered them plentifully again. I remember being rather chilled by the silence in which the story was received, until the stranger in the corner explained it by saying, in a small voice, "Yes, that is quite a true story, for I was the man who did it!" The others all were aware that he was the perpetrator, and I must always regret that I missed the joy of being among the audience to appreciate myself putting my foot deeper and deeper in while I told the tale.

Once, in a ride in covert, I saw every one of the small boys employed as "stops" dive simultaneously into the brambles, and thought for the moment that they had been raked down the line. It was not so. It was far worse than that. They were Board School boys, and had not passed their standard, and their vanishing was caused by the inspector coming round the corner and sending them to covert as a partridge covey hides itself when the hawk comes overhead.

At a shooting party in Sweden a guest explained that he had hesitated to shoot at a hare because a peasant was in the line of fire. "Ah," the host replied, "that is a great pity—there are so few hares and we have lots of peasants!" Another pleasant tale told me by the narrator of the above, was that of an English fellow-shooter who peppered him about the legs, and excused himself by saying, "Oh, I had no idea it was you, or I should not have fired. I thought it was a 'stop'!"

## CANINE CRANIOLOGY.

WHY dogs take an interest in absolutely dry bones, which cannot be by any chance good to eat, is rather uncertain. These two puppies, alike in age, but vastly different in size, might be taken for students in a canine class on craniology, from the earnest way in which they are inspecting the old ox's skull which lies between them. The foxhound whelp puts his nose on what was the point of the ox's forehead, while the terrier pup puts his head on one side on the ground, and squints up



J. S. Ford.

A TOOTHsome MEAL.

Copyr'ght

the frontal bone, as if trying to see whether the owner of the skull had a duly intelligent facial angle. It has been suggested that dogs keep dry bones and carry them about, as men keep menus of big dinners, to act as a kind of pleasant reminder of past pleasures. Most readers will have enjoyed the acquaintance of dogs who always keep a stock of quite useless bones hidden near the kennel, and when unchained always pick one up, carry it off, and perhaps bury it. Burying food represents to most carnivorous animals what an investment or a locking up of money does to people. It shows that the article has become the property of the animal burying it. If a dog sees another dog trying to dig up his bone he always attacks it, and the would-be robber usually abandons the attempt, as if conscious of a bad cause.

Wild dogs in India apparently do not bury the remains

of their prey, but wolves often do, and foxes do so commonly. Such action would be expected to be the result of experience, and to be performed only by old, or at least by adult, animals which had found that it did not pay to leave property about. But this is not the case with dogs. Puppies have the burying habit implanted in them by instinct. Quite small pups will carry off anything which strikes them as odd, such as hats, brushes, shoes, and the like, and bury them. Not long ago a very small, fat setter puppy was seen to take a bone to the bottom of quite a deep hole which had been dug by an older dog. At the bottom of this exhausted "claim" the puppy scratched a little hole, and partly buried its bone. It then found that it could not climb out, whereupon it yelped and wept so bitterly that the old bitch came trotting up to see what was the matter, and lifted it out by the nape of its neck.

## THINGS ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

FOR weeks the drawing-room was a-flutter with poultry literature before so much as a comb was seen or a cackle heard in those hen-yards of ours; it was impossible, Betty said, to over-estimate the importance of starting with the right strains. Dorkings and Indian Game were, at that date, believed to offer the best chance of the true *poulet roti* chicken resulting, and eight of the finest pullets of each breed were to be purchased with a cockerel of entirely unrelated but equally magnificent blood. Both pure-bred and cross-bred chickens were to be raised, but other pure-bred chickens were to be had from purchased sittings of eggs; in the autumn of that first season there was to be a strenuous sifting and grading, and it was only in the second year that Betty undertook to have "the finest birds in England." There ensued a period when the luggage cart was always flying to the station to collect hampers of fowls submitted "on approval" as the shops call it, and Esmeralda and I were bidden to conclave in the yard when these creatures were released from the packing crates, and subjected to the closest scrutiny. Betty's object was to avoid "being landed," as she put it, with spindly show birds which were being cleared from the pens of professional poultry-people, because they "hadn't a cup in them." This was attended with considerable expense and disappointment—for almost none of the creatures came up to her practical standards. Advertisers had been sorted into classes by my little sister, and she began with the people who sent her immense catalogues, in which every bird was from "unlimited grass runs," and closely related to the "Palace winner" of the previous year's championship. From only one of these firms, Messrs. Cook, of Orpington, did she succeed in getting what she wanted: in the other cases, the birds went back in the luggage cart within the hour, and sometimes recriminatory letters speckled the mail of the succeeding week. After this, "titled persons" came next on Betty's list, and she received coroneted fowls in batches from dukes and earls, very few of which, in her view, passed muster. "The next thing will be to try the rectors and vicars," she said despondently. "I must say, I had hoped to avoid them. I can't imagine a rector—still less a vicar—parting with anything that was worth the keeping."

I forbore to question her about the ground of this gloomy opinion of the Church's earnest servants, and was pleased to find that she secured a team of pullets—they were Buff Leghorns, and destined to supply the egg basket, which in the case of Dorkings and Indian Games seemed likely to be rather empty—from a rectress, whose price was modest and her birds beyond reproach. Still, we were short of that unrelated Game cock, and Betty fell again to her list of poultry raisers, which had now only two classes left upon it; these were "spinsters" and "retired military men."

It has to be stated, since this account is strictly serious and truthful, that she was badly worsted by the spinsters; one cock, on which she paid a heavy deposit, arrived with his comb bleeding from contact, no doubt, with his basket; he was all wrong in every way, colour, shape, length of leg, opulence of tail; but Betty, before returning him, and mindful of spring frosts, carefully vaselined his crest, and after giving him a meal of mixed liver and oatmeal, despatched him promptly. *That bird was dead when he arrived*, and the mystery was never explained to us. A terrible correspondence followed, in which it was freely asserted on the one hand, by his incensed owner, that he had been (a) poisoned with vaseline; (b), unduly exposed by the railway company; (c), starved by us, and other shocking things which I forget. For days, the law, in its severest form, seemed to brood over the Manor and the family in general, but Betty forfeited her deposit, wrote very business-like letters, and developed a threatening correspondence with the traffic manager or some other lofty official of the railway company, and finally became the cheerful recipient of a postal order for 30s.,

the precise ownership of which we have never been able to determine. As she had only paid 15s. deposit on the cock and his fare both ways, which amounted to 5s., our bewildered poultry expert entered 10s. in the profit column of her balance-sheet—and it was the only item in that column for a very long while.

It was after this that she paid a visit to London and drove to the Central Market in Aunt Pleydell's carriage. She doesn't yet know what impelled her to this course, but it turned out better than any of her other efforts at securing the right stamp of pullet, so we may say that it was Providence, hovering directly over those hen-yards, like a hawk—oh no! not, of course, the least like a hawk. She went and she saw six pullets confined in a tiny cage at the back of one of the hen and pigeon shops; they were the most beautiful, burnished, pine-apple-coloured birds in the world; they were short in the leg, deep in the breast, tightly feathered, *amazingly* heavy when you picked them up. They reminded you, somehow, of the late Queen's wedding present, with their rich Eastern colour, and they had clever, snaky heads and the fine dark eye of Odalisques, of houris, of Bayadères! They were only 8s. apiece—and they were being sold by a retired military man in Cambridgeshire! That was the only thing about them that Betty did not like, but it was so small a thing that she "planked down" the money and had them carried in a basket and put up beside the sullen footman, whom she actually told to "look after them," and drove them straight to Grosvenor Place. She believes now that they pecked at his calves, and that that was what made him so "remote in his manner" when he carried them into the hall. Further, she alleges that they contracted the cold, which finally developed into acute "roup" (*alias* diphtheria, as I believe), because he left them in a draught between the umbrella stand and the swing door leading to the pantries. Anyhow, it is matter of history that they sickened instantly and were all very ill indeed when they reached the Manor next day. I could never tell you how devotedly Betty tended them. She seemed to feel that they were the real nucleus of a noble hen-yard—as they were and are; with a strong solution of permanganate of potash, with the loop end of a hair-pin (Betty says there is actually *nothing* in practical surgery, or out of it, that cannot be done with a hair-pin, and I must say she proves it), with Esmeralda's best scent-spray machine she did unnameable things for those birds during ten agonising days. She kept them in the fernery, where the temperature corresponded very much to that produced by six bronchitis-kettles. She nourished them exclusively upon "Beef-Plasmon" as being the most perfect combination of nourishment and stimulant known to science. They walked upon antiseptic cotton-waste because that was the warmest thing for the feet, and twice in the night she rose to spray their absurd throats. The end of it was she got them round, and nothing was entered on the balance-sheet for medical attendance, "loss of own time," and so forth. I can never forget coming upon the dear child a few minutes before breakfast one morning—she had been up since six—to find her gazing speechlessly, with dim eyes, upon some foreign object in amongst the cotton-waste stuff.

"Look!"—she stooped suddenly and held it out to me—"an egg! Oh, Ermyngarde!" Her voice was quite choked and queer. In some moment of delirium, one of them had laid.

That day they had an hour or two in the sun in my rose-garden, because it was sheltered. Next day they were aired off in the large greenhouse, and the day after, heavily sprayed with Jeyes' Fluid all over, they were pronounced out of quarantine, and placed in the hen-yard they were designed to decorate, and it only remained to prevent Betty "burning everything" in the fernery, where an enormous tub of the Killarney fern, which has been in our family for forty years, was pronounced to be "probably seething" with roup microbes.



Nothing could now hold her in her determined search for a suitable cock to complete the Indian Game pen. She wrote scores of letters, tried every means—nothing was good enough. At length she entangled herself with a young man—we felt he was a young man, he wrote such long letters in blue pencil in a sort of press copying-book, from which he tore the leaves—who apparently had the cock ("stag" he called it, for his own obscure reasons, no doubt) in all England.

They spent a fortnight writing to each other, and got upon the most friendly terms. Throughout he addressed Betty as "Dear sir," which was, no doubt, eminently natural of him. At length it appeared that he would "be in your neighbourhood" on the occasion of a county cricket match, and would "look in upon you, if agreeable," between the hours of twelve and one.

This put us all in a flutter. I may say here that Betty has always possessed a singular power of attracting the very oddst kind of young men, by letter, in railway carriages, at concerts—it does not seem to matter where. It never happens to Emerald or me, only to Betty. She forgets to get out of trains or gets left over at junctions, and comes driving home in high gigs in company with the strangest specimens. I can never forget the occasion of her going to the Guernsey cow sale and returning with a licensed victualler, who— But that is altogether a separate adventure.

It is her frank, delightful way of talking to people, and her utter absence of "class side"—to coin an egregious term—that is responsible.

Well, the most awful person appeared "between twelve and one": I only noticed a long, unusual sort of coat proceeding beside Betty to the hen-yard; but they had an informing talk, for this person, as I subsequently learned at lunch, to which Betty warmly pressed him to stay, was deep in the secrets of "the fancy." He produced a slim, brass-tipped cane from his ulster pocket, and struck Betty's favourite pullet sharply on the neck to make it "show its form"—this seems to be a habit with poultry people—and he said, "That's right, sir, that's right," to every one of Father's carefully exhumed scraps of information about jungle fowl, and the treatment of the sacred peacocks in Burmah, and other matters of which he can have known less than nothing.

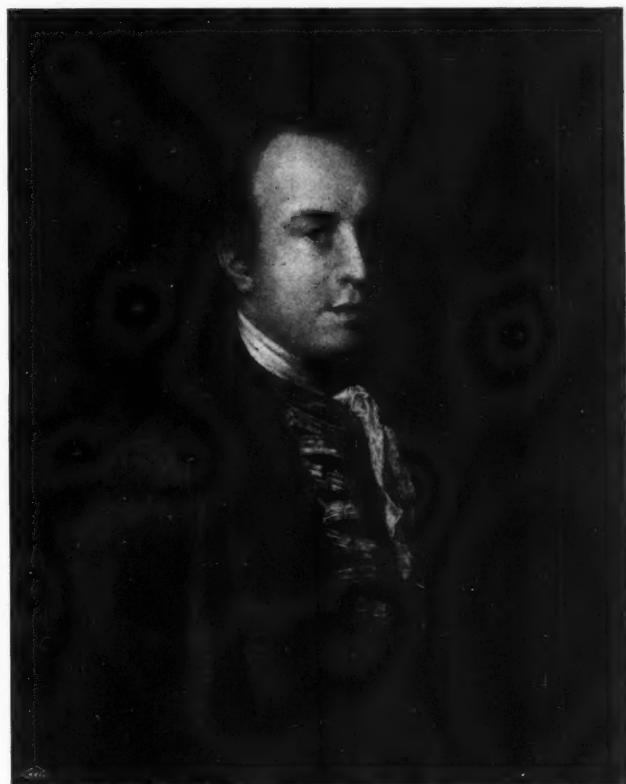
But he succeeded in selling Betty an animal that she says (now) must have been in the Ark; its spurs were pared down to make it look young, its legs were scraped, its tail pulled so as to be quite small and meagre, as Game tails ought to be, and its comb trimmed with a pocket-knife until it had none, and altogether it was the hollowest sham of a game cock ever seen, and lost Betty an entire season. None of us dares to allude, however remotely, to this expensively purchased experience—and it does not appear anywhere on the balance-sheet.

## BOOKS OF THE DAY.

**T**HE History of the Meynell Hounds and Country," by J. L. Randall (Sampson Low, Marston, 1901), is a worthy memorial of two hunting families, the Meynells and the Leedhams, Master and men for nearly a century. The period covered by the history is one which the future sportsman will look back upon with regret as the golden age of fox-hunting. Nor could any historian pick out a country in which the successive phases through which nearly all our great hunts have passed are more clearly shown. Mr. Meynell Ingram of Hoar Cross was the grandson of the father of fox-hunting, to whom we owe alike the improvement of the sport and the raising of the standard of manners in the hunting-field. The first Meynell was a scholar and a man of fashion. A sportsman at Quorn, the friend of Dr. Johnson, and a frequenter of the best society of his day in town, he marks the change from the Squire Westerns, and even he Roger de Coverleys, to a higher level of manners and culture. To him Mr. Meynell Ingram was a worthy successor. Not less enthusiastic in sport, he too was a man of cultivated taste and refined manners. Some of the best of Sydney Smith's letters are addressed to Mrs. Meynell, and the witty canon evidently grudges friends whom he esteemed so much to hunting. "Pray give over hunting; ask Meynell to leave off, he has been pursuing the fox for thirty years." This was written when Mr. Meynell had been Master for about seventeen years, so that as he had no fox-hounds of his own till he was thirty-three, he must have begun hunting, as a good sportsman should, in his teens. In fact, the growth of the Meynell Hunt was, like that of most of our other hunts, gradual. As the Badminton were originally staghounds, so the Hoar Cross pack were first beagles and then harriers. Mr. Meynell hunted in a fashion different from that of our own day. He went out sometimes once a week, and sometimes oftener, as convenience directed. The country open to him was wide, but foxes were scarce. The Staffordshire country was plough, for corn then was worth growing. His

huntsman was old Tom Leedham, who combined the duties of coachman and huntsman. The trim fences of modern times were unknown, and great ragged, almost impenetrable boundary fences divided the fields. There were few strangers in the field, and when Mr. Meynell Ingram inherited the Temple Newsam estates in Yorkshire he hunted hounds at his own expense for the benefit of his friends and neighbours, high and low. The old coachman Tom was succeeded by another Tom Leedham, who was perhaps the most famous and the most crusty of the family. He hunted hounds well on into a green old age. Latterly he became very jealous of his nephew Charles, who in his turn succeeded him. One day Tom had a fall and dislocated his thumb. He was railing at his nephew, as usual, when the latter remarked, "I wonder you don't say it was my fault you put your thumb out!" Old Tom grunted out, "Well, so 'twas! If you had na' joomped there I should na' ha' joomped, and then I should na' ha' fallen and put me thumb out!" Charles Leedham, the last of a race of faithful servants and good sportsmen, has lately gone to his rest. An honest heart, a brusque manner (Lord Southampton called them "the thulky Leedhams"), and a brave spirit, he will long be remembered. He was perhaps the least bloodthirsty of huntsmen, though perhaps a huntsman, like a hound, is none the worse for being keen to break up his fox.

With the death of Mr. Meynell Ingram, followed shortly afterwards by that of his son, the hunt passed into a new stage

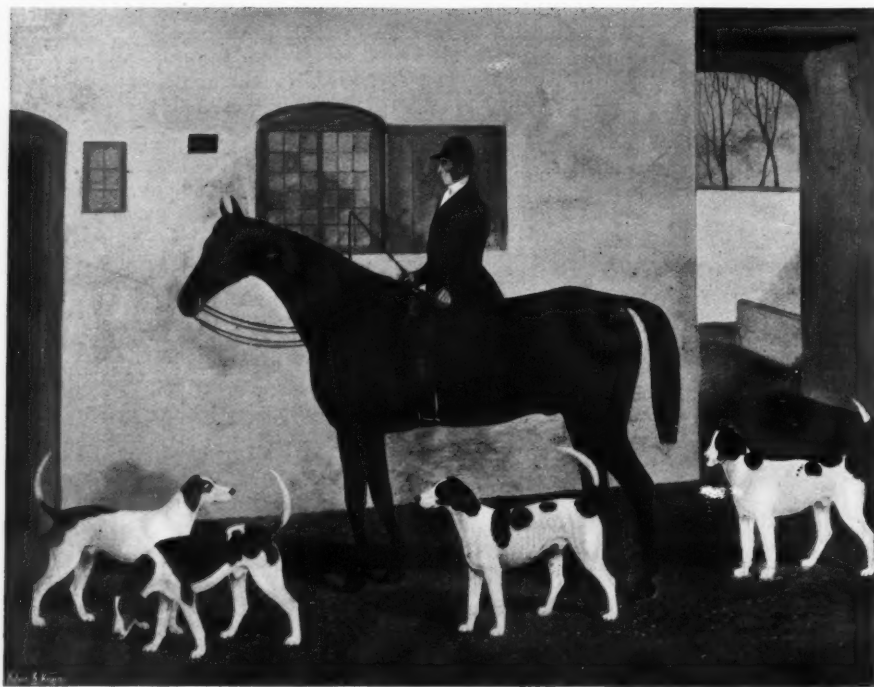


HUGO MEYNELL.

of existence. It was then called the Meynell, and became a subscription pack. Such a hunt was in those days, after all, but an association of friends and neighbours. The Master, the committee, and the subscribers were all local men, and they still had a Leedham to hunt hounds. Some glorious seasons of sport they had. Those were the days of subscription packs, as the generation before had been of private hunts. But still the question about a new comer was, "Who is he?" In due course this state of things passed away, the country was grass, the foxes were more numerous, the hounds better than ever, but the country was hunted by strangers, the houses had new occupants, and when a stranger came to hunt the question was, "How much will he subscribe?" Hunting here as elsewhere had entered on a new phase, the end of which we have not yet seen.

The old characters began to disappear, and men's minds, like their coats, boots, and breeches, were all of a pattern. Such riders as Sir Matthew Blakiston, such parsons as Mr. Inge of All Souls', were no more. The latter's church was a tiny one. "Three feet shorter than the dining-room," remarked someone. "Yes, and the living not half so good," was the reply of the curate.

These two handsome volumes are indeed full of good stories, and of much information about men, hounds, and horses. Also of the counties of Derby and Stafford, for the history of the



JOE LEEDHAM.

county is touched upon as well as that of the hunt. But why do hunting historians with knowledge, industry, and, when they choose to use it, a pleasant style, like Mr. Randall, make a kind of literary haggis of hunting histories? The fairy godmother has endowed the author with everything needful for such a book, but left out the sense of form and order. Selection, arrangement, and compression would have made this a far better book than it is. For all that, however, it is a book to buy and to read, for if the form is not there, the substance is. As to the illustrations and the printing, they could hardly be better than they are. The proof-reading, too, no small matter in a book wherein are so many names, is excellent. I have read it eagerly, and have discovered scarcely any errors. To members of the Meynell Hunt, past and present, this book cannot but be welcome. For these no doubt it was chiefly written, but I cannot think that any sportsman who cares at all about the story of fox-hunting will be content till the comely volumes adorn his shelves.

T. F. DALE.

IT is not too much to say that in *The God of His Fathers* (Isbister) Jack London (which I take to be an obvious pseudonym, although it is not put in inverted commas) has made good his claim to be ranked as one of the very small band of men and women who can write good short stories in the English language. For some occult reason which has baffled all literary critics, the short-story writer is not only born not made, as Horace says of the poet, but for the most part born on the other side of the Channel. Therefore Jack London, with these tales of the Klondyke, is welcome and doubly welcome. The first of them, which gives the title to the book, is a deep and a vigorous psychological study, and the contrast between the rough digger who faces death cheerfully and fighting like a Homeric hero rather than deny the God over whom he did not trouble himself up to that time, and the sincere and craven missionary, who, in abject fear of man's anger, dares the wrath of God, is as grim and striking as anything I have read for many a long day. All the stories are good, but perhaps the best of all is that entitled "Grit of Women," where the account of the death of the faithful squaw Passuk is as pathetic as can be. She has died of starvation and exhaustion in the snow on the dreary trail, and the man for whom she died tells her story:

"And she said: 'When first you came to the Chilcat, nor looked upon me, but bought me as a man buys a dog, and took me away, my heart was hard against you and filled with bitterness and fear. But that was long ago. For you were kind to me, Charley, as a good man is kind to his dog. Your heart was cold, and there was no room for me, yet you dealt me fair and your ways were just. And I was with you when you did bold deeds and led great ventures, and I measured you against the men of other breeds, and I saw you stood among them full of honour, and your word was wise, your tongue true. And I grew proud of you, till it came that you filled all my heart, and all my thought was of you. You were as the midsummer sun, when its golden trail runs in a circle and never leaves the sky, and whatever way I cast my eyes, I beheld the sun. But your heart was ever cold, Charley, and there was no room.'

"And I said: 'It is so. It was cold, and there was no room. But that is past. Now my heart is like the snowfall in the spring, when the sun has come back. There is a great thaw and a bending, a sound of running waters, and a budding and sprouting of green things. And there is drumming of partridges, and songs of robins, and great music, for the winter is broken, Passuk, and I have learned the love of woman.'

*With the Royal Tour*, by E. F. Knight (Longmans). Of literature concerning the Royal Tour there is apparently to be no end, although the *Times* is probably right in stating that those who desire a full and permanent record will be well advised to wait for Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's book. Still, Mr. Knight's work is breezy and excellent, and may be cordially recommended to readers at home and in the colonies. In the colonies,

indeed, he is better known than in England, for literary memory is longer there than here, and I have heard on good authority that in the clubs of Melbourne and Sydney last summer—our summer, not theirs—Mr. Knight and "Where Three Empires Meet" were on every tongue.

Not the least admirable point in the "Caxton Library," published by Messrs. Newnes in a handy form, and in bindings of soft leather which are at once serviceable and beautiful, is the wisdom shown in the selection of the volumes, of which the latest is *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*. At this time of day it were mere waste of time and ink for me to offer an estimate or an "appreciation" of the ploughman-poet; and Messrs. Newnes with great wisdom have avoided the vicious practice of putting this volume into the world with an introduction or a "foreword"—absurd phrase!—by any of the moderns. Instead, they have contented themselves by reprinting the just and striking review written by Carlyle for the *Edinburgh* on Lockhart's "Life of Robert Burns," which is far better than anything that has been written since. Carlyle was, indeed, a true prophet when he wrote: "The character of Burns is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is moved by time." Far more than enough has been written about Burns; and if the world at large would but read Burns and give the critics the go-by, they would learn to love him, and to forget, or even disregard, the circumstances of his life. Sometimes one is tempted to wish that this process of loving study of poetry to the exclusion of vulgar curiosity concerning the private life of the poet might be pursued more generally. All the tittle-tattle about the private life of Shelley, the escapades of Byron, the weak health of Keats, and the deer-stealing propensities of Shakespeare, is really very vulgar and so did, and it tends to spoil one's appreciation of their poems.

Obedying a fancy which is scorned by my superior friends, I am still able to read with interest the multitudinous books of "John Strange Winter," of which *A Matter of Sentiment* (F. V. White) is the latest. But it compels a gentle protest. In this volume, and in another of which the name has escaped me, "John Strange Winter," in spite of a military binding, deserts the military, and her main subject is drink. The other volume of which I have forgotten the name, went near—I don't wish to be taken too seriously—to sapping my moral fibre. In it the heroine found that green Chartreuse gave her the motive of inspired works of fiction. My confession goes no further than to say that green Chartreuse failed to inspire me, perhaps because not taken in sufficient quantities. But the tendency of such a doctrine is clearly evil. For ambitious writers of either sex might be tempted to think that full inspiration was only a matter of quantity consumed. In *A Matter of Sentiment*, however, the moral is excellent. A man otherwise amiable, who consumes rye-whisky with incredible speed and in vast quantities, comes to a bad end. In fact, he is shot in self-defence in an American saloon by his familiar friend. Then, the familiar friend goes back to England, finds the widow has been faithful, marries her daughter, who is beautiful, and successfully conceals the part which he has played in simplifying the plot by thrusting the original drunkard out of the world. Even in this novel, however, the author does permit us one of those glances into military society in which she delights. When the hero, once a soldier, returns to England in search of the widow of his friend and victim, he finds her in a garrison town, and the luncheon in barracks and the chaff of his brother officers are well done, after their kind. These are not the best soldiers; but they are real.

*Two Winters in Norway*, by A. Edmund Spender, B.A. Oxon (Longmans), is a pleasant account of some winters spent in Norway by a special correspondent, who has worked for the *Westminster Gazette* and other papers and periodicals, who has enjoyed himself so much that he would like to tempt others to visit Norway in winter. This is particularly generous in that he writes: "I am a solitary bird when in search of a holiday." But really Mr. Spender, who is presumably young, ought to know better than to describe himself as B.A. Oxon. Bachelors of Arts of Oxford and Cambridge, as a rule, do not specify their universities, because it is unnecessary. Bachelors of other universities would be more honest if they did specify the origin of their degrees.

Mr. C. Lewis Hind has thought fit, under the title of *Life's Little Things* (Black), to republish a selection of the more or less pretty little articles called "Things Seen," which have appeared anonymously in the *Academy*, and now turn out to be the work of the editor. Unkind people might be tempted to say that this fact accounts for the original appearance of some of them, for although the volume contains more than one complete prose poem, and many flashes which are distinctly brilliant, it is, taken as a whole, very uneven in quality, and overloaded with trivialities, which are not rendered completely attractive even by pretty writing. In the *Academy* these little pieces have often served for light relief, but 215 pages of them in a volume are rather too much of a good thing.

It is good news that *Our Irish Song Birds*, by the Rev. C. W. Benson (Hodges, Dublin), has gone into a second edition, for this proves that the late head-master of Rathmines School has found a public which can appreciate simple and not over-pedantic writing by a careful observer who is not superior to the charms of the folk-lore of birds. Ireland is not particularly rich in song birds, and it appears that even the blackcap and the garden warbler, which are rare in Ireland, are seldom in good voice there. Still, for the real lover of Nature this little book, which is fairly but not profusely illustrated, has considerable attraction.

Admirers of the author of "Mr. Barnes of New York," Mr. Archibald Clavering Gunter, will no doubt welcome *A Manufacturer's Daughter and Deacon and Actress* (F. V. White and Co.). Here, perhaps, one sample will suffice to indicate the quality of a style which may best be described as simply racy:

"As for the young laundryman, he has been gazing at the maiden from the seclusion of a neighbouring brush-clump. On his face is a passionate excitement



equal to the cordial; he is muttering, 'Have I found her? Sometimes I think so. Is her damned Yankee twang assumed? Sometimes I'd swear it is,' and bursts out laughing in a neurotic and hysterical way."

## A CATCH OF PIKE AT WARGRAVE

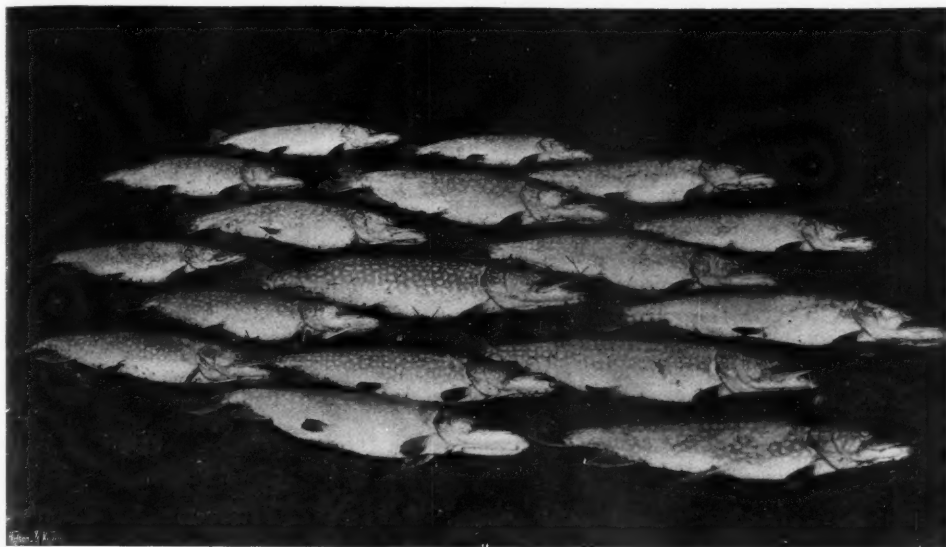
**I** FIND a pretty general belief among those that go down to the Thames in boats that the existence of any fish in its waters is altogether a fiction. I do not quite know what those who hold this view make of the statements now and then published in the papers about catches of various fish in the Father of Rivers, from that strange carnivorous creature, the Thames trout, down to the dace and the roach and so on. I do not think they go so far as to believe that all these fishes are the inventions of the imaginations of those who put them on a record purporting to be veracious, but I am quite sure that they credit them at least with some embellishment from very generous exaggeration. Virtually, at all events, they hold

for the pike will eat them. I do not think, however, that the most fastidious of anglers could fail in an envious appreciation of the bag that is presented in these pictures. It is a bag composed of a fish that is not in the game list, so to speak. These be pike, obvious and formidable pike, every one of them. They come from the Thames, from that river as to which there is incredulity in the minds of sundry whether it holds fish worthy of the fishing, from that river too in which, undeniably, there are many fish, and as to which there is much talk and much effort at the present moment, directed towards the reintroduction of salmon. The first question that may be suggested by the sight of this noble catch of pike—the work, be it said, of two rods, one of them wielded by a lady, within the short space of six and a-half crowded hours of glorious life—is whether the salmon, in their young years, will have much chance with such an army of their enemies in the water as this contingent lying on the bank must indicate. Perhaps this is a question that need not concern us greatly. It is only in the parr and smolt stages that the pike can take much toll of the salmon, and the best evidence of the ability of fish life to exist even in the presence of many pike, is the multitude of fishes that really do, in spite of the jaundiced views of the eclectic anglers, throng the waters of the Thames.

The truth is that in a big river there is room for all, and perhaps the weedy haunts of the pike are the least likely of all parts of the stream to engage the affections of the salmon, who like the clear pools and the gravel floor.

The seventeen fish shown in these pictures, one of which also immortalises the captors of this record bag, weighed 82lb. They all were caught, as aforesaid, by two rods in six and a-half hours; and the date of their capture was January 17th, from henceforth a red-letter day in two lives at least. The catch, not unnaturally, excited some little interest, and Messrs. Marsh Brothers, the Henley photographers, have done well to put it on record with their camera. It may be of interest, too, to indicate with some exactness the spot in which this remarkable catch was made. It may be presumed that a certain number of our readers are fairly acquainted with Wargrave and its many beauties.

About a quarter of a mile below the old wooden railway bridge there is a backwater that runs up close to the church. There, at its head, is a still deep pool, 14ft. or so in



Marsh Brothers.

THAMES PIKE EXTRAORDINARY.

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a strong working theory that the Thames is not a fish-bearing river so far as they are concerned, because its trout will not rise to the fly, its salmon are either historical or else prospective, and its "coarse fish," as all the rest of the tribe are called with little courtesy, make no appeal to the tastes that are delicately nourished on the trout of the chalk streams and the salmon of the Highlands. The scorn in which the angler for the game fish holds the fish that are called coarse is scarcely to be believed, and is only to be explained by his ignorance of the really good sport that some of these are able, under favourable circumstances, to afford him. But it has to be admitted that if the angler of the game fish and scorner of meaner delights is disposed to make any exception at all, that exception is made first, and perhaps solely, in favour of the pike. For one thing, the pike is his enemy. The worst thing he can say of a trout stream, next to saying that there are no trout in it, is to say that there are pike in it. Indeed the latter is the worse condemnation of the two, for if there are no trout and no pike it is possible to remedy the deficiency by turning trout in, but if there are pike, in any quantity, it is very little use turning in trout—at least under a quarter of a pound in weight—



Marsh Brothers.

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED.

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depth, a very favourite haunt of pike. Here, just above Mr. Hannen's boat-house, this catch of pike was taken—here, or approximately here. Let it be said approximately, for perhaps the wise and skilful angler does not indicate with all the precision that may guide another to the spot the exact point at which he may have made his record bag. A modest reticence, which need not be illiberal, is to be observed in these matters. Still this is the spot, as near as need be, and many a summer frequenter of the silver Thames, looking on this

picture and conjuring to his mind's eye the exciting struggle involved in the capture of all those strong and able-bodied pike, will find it contrasting greatly with his memory of the quiet backwater in which he lay and perhaps dozed while his boat floated motionless. All these pike, probably, have looked up at him in wonder as he dozed. These individuals of their kind will look and wonder never again; but there will be others, their relatives. The Thames is not depleted, even by such a catch as this.

PISCATOR.

## O'ER FIELD AND FURROW.

WE have had a bad week, even for this indifferent season. Frost on Monday morning, in the evening a thaw, and Tuesday was a day on which the only fault was that the ground was too soft. Then came the frost again. But this is not all. There was a brilliant gallop on Tuesday, such a lurch as occurs but once or twice in a season, if so often. The Cottesmore, meeting at Tilton Wood, had a five-mile point, without a check or a waver all the way. Hounds ran at top speed from Skeffington to Botany Bay, hung just so long as was necessary to drive out their fox, and fairly raced at his brush to ground near Ingarsby. The fox was beaten before he left Botany Bay, but managed to keep away from hounds till he was safe underground. Of a fairly large field the huntsman only was near hounds at all. But, ride as he would, Thatcher was two fields behind them for the greater part of the way. There were three or four men who were chasing the huntsman; of the rest a very few knew that hounds were running at all, but these were fairly distanced by the pace and favoured by the roads, and in turn managed to find out where hounds had gone to and obtain an occasional glimpse of the leaders. Most of the field never left the wood till hounds were out of sight and hearing. This was the second excursion the Cottesmore made into the Quorn country that day. The grass rode deep, a light fall of snow having softened the ground, and hounds skimmed over the surface easily while horses laboured along with difficulty. This run will be praised and regretted for many a day. To have seen it would have made up for many disappointments; to have lost it adds one more to the dark days of a season which has never been a satisfactory one. I think Mr. Hames of Leicester and Lord Cowley were among those who were nearest to the huntsman, and there were, perhaps, two or three more. But there must always be an element of hearsay in a run we do not see. At all events, it was a grand swing—nearly six miles at top speed. The Cottesmore were, so far as I can gather, the only pack favoured with a scent on that day.

Passing from Leicestershire to very different country, I have some illustra-



E. T. Sheaf.

STIFF COUNTRY.

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tions of the Isle of Wight Hunt. This pack has had something like half a century of existence. Hunting has been kept up there with no lack of enthusiasm. It is, in fact, though little known to fame, by no means the worst country in Hampshire. There is within its limits a good deal of variety: there is grass and plough, down and woodland, and as a good proportion of the country carries a scent, there is plenty of sport. Foxes are preserved for the hunt, and wire is not common, nor are the farmers troubled by the huge assemblies that are felt to be so great a burden by the farmers of other countries. Indeed, it was, and I hope is still, very much of a farmers' hunt. The kindly soil and climate and the presence of good markets render farming less precarious here than elsewhere. Farmers can still enjoy a share in the sport which is their natural recreation. The hunting man likes to be able to hunt oftener than twice a week, so that the island is never likely to be overrun

with visitors in search of sport, but if for any reason you have to be in the island it is well worth while to take a couple of useful horses that can climb a hill or gallop over the downs, and that can go on and off a bank neatly and cleverly. The ragged fence and the steep hill of our illustrations show the character of the upland and lowland countries of the hunt, while the old huntsman and his hounds trotting along the road give a touch of homely picturesqueness to the lovely lanes of the country. Indeed, the country is fortunate, for elsewhere in Hampshire the use of wire makes fox-hunting difficult, and Captain Standish resigns the West Hambleton because he cannot show sport amidst the increasing obstacles to hunting. In this country I have lived and hunted, and remember well the long searches for a fox. On the other hand, if the Hambleton foxes were hard to find, they were very stout and difficult to kill. If it were not for the wire we might in a wild and rough country, such as much of this is, fancy ourselves back again in the days of our forefathers, who had more time and more patience, and were not spoilt by living in a country where it takes a quarter of an hour to find a fox and twenty minutes to kill him. If you lose one there are plenty more just over the road. Not that I should be disposed to grumble at plenty of foxes. "Too



E. T. Sheaf.

A STEEP DECLIVITY.

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many foxes!" said Beckford somewhere; "you might as well complain of having too much money."

Two other countries have found Masters. Mr. Cresswell is going to the Morpeth, a pleasant enough Northumbrian district. It is rather a varied and broken country, and is one rather for a man who loves the work of hounds than for a hard rider. The South Oxfordshire have found a Master in Mr. Barber of Culham Court, and in so doing have made an excellent choice. Mr. Barber has just that sympathy with and knowledge of farmers' interests which should make him a capital in a farmers' country like the South Oxon. To all horse-breeders Mr. Barber is well known as a successful exhibitor of hunters. As we hoped would be the case, the hunt over which Mr. Gosling of White Waltham is to be Master will be known as "The Garth." The new Master starts with the good wishes of the landowners, including His Majesty, whose forest of Windsor is in Mr. Garth's country. Lord and Lady Downshire, who, although for the time being they hunt in Leicestershire, yet are not forgetful of their duties to the sport round their own home, have given their support. Easthampstead Park has always been a stronghold for foxes during Mr. Garth's reign.

It is pleasant to hear that peace reigns between Miss Chichester of Arlington and her neighbours of the Barnstaple Hunt. This Miss Chichester must not be confounded with the other family of the same name who are seated near Tiverton. An old Catholic race, with all the hereditary love of the chase strong in them, they are warm supporters of Mr. Unwin and Sir John Amory. From the country hunted by the latter comes a story of an engine-driver who first saw the hounds at fault, and then a few miles further on viewed the hunted hind. He halted the train and telegraphed back to Mr. Amory. The Master lifted his pack three miles, hit off the quarry, and killed the hind. But is this quite fair? In spite of the great authority of Beckford, who lays it down that a fair fox-hunter and a foolish one are synonymous, I incline greatly to giving the hunted animal every opportunity of escape that the chances of the chase offer it. Holloas are among legitimate helps (and they are quite as often a hindrance to the huntsman), but a holloa by telegram! This is an anomaly and an innovation, and in such matters I confess myself a crusted conservative.

Polo players, which indeed means hunting men in the summer, will be interested to know that Mr. Gill and Major Morris have arranged for all the



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THE CROSS ROADS.

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won the race, and won in good style, for the matter of that; but then we have Manifesto, 12st. 8lb., Drogheda, 12st. 4lb., and Grudon, 11st. 3lb., and it should be remembered that both Manifesto and Drogheda have proved themselves to be sterling good horses, and I doubt, and doubt greatly, whether Ambush II. or any other horse in England can beat Manifesto at even weights, which is practically what Ambush II. is asked to do. If he succeeds in this task, as we all hope he will, he will have earned the right to be considered the best steeplechaser in England to-day, and if he fails there will be no disgrace attaching to failure in such high-class company. Among the horses which have been treated to a full measure of weight, I think Bloomer, 11st. 6lb., and Fanciful, 11st. 6lb., can clearly be reckoned, while among the light-weights I can see many a tempting opportunity for a long shot. What of Barsac, who when he tries is no bad horse, at 9st. 12lb., or the much-advertised Levanter at the feather-weight of 9st. 10lb., or Mr. Bottomley's promising young horse Easter Ogue at 10st. 3lb.? Does not everything point to a very open race, in which at least half-a-dozen horses would seem to have an equally good chance? As I

have said before, Ambush II. has all his work cut out, and the cautious man will sedulously refrain from accepting the very cramped offers which the bookmakers are making about him, at any rate for the present. If the spirit of speculation is so strong in the heart of any man that he cannot restrain himself, there are many horses which offer a profitable medium for mild gambling without going near the favourite.

The imminence of the flat-race season has hardly yet been realised by the majority of those in charge of horses, and the fact that the Lincoln Meeting begins on Tuesday, March 18th, at least five days earlier than usual, comes with something of a shock to the great majority of people who had overlooked it; in addition, the bitter cold and the frost and the snow have made work impossible in many districts, so that many stables are bound to be backward. At Newmarket especially is there trouble on account of the weather, and many trainers have done little or nothing, while in those cases in which work has been done it has only been of the very lightest kind, and very few gallops have been heard of during the last

week. Of the Lincoln horses news is to hand about St. Maclou, Epsom Lad, Doricles, Disguise II., Watershed, Olympian, and The Solicitor; but even the most daring prophet has not yet lifted up his voice in prophecy, and everything points to a quiet meeting at Lincoln.

How wonderfully consistent the authorities at Royal Ascot are in ill-doing! If there is one course of action which is the least efficient and the least satisfactory to everybody who is likely to be even remotely interested, that course is the one which they can be relied upon to adopt. They have been doing it for years, and, true to their traditions, they have done it again in the case of the new alterations which are being prosecuted so vigorously and with much speed. They have renovated and reconstructed the Royal Stand and Royal Enclosure; they have attended with great care and kindness to the wants of "the gentlemen of the Press"; they have even made real efforts to improve the course itself; and they have left the ordinary stands, which are occupied by the great majority of racegoers, in the same position as they were formerly, in which position and from which position it has been practically impossible to see the racing at all, as all the world knows. There is crass stupidity about this parsimonious policy, which I venture to think will act somewhat like a boomerang if pursued very much further. Let the King have a new stand by all manner of means; attend to the wants of the Press with scrupulous



E. T. Sheaf.

UP TO THE GIRTHS.

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usual matches and tournaments. The committee have sanctioned the building of a pavilion in the new ground, and have added 50yds. to the same, both much-needed improvements. All members will be glad that Mr. G. A. Williams is still secretary, and that we are to have more space for dining. X.

## RACING NOTES.

NOW is the winter of our discontent" rendered, if not glorious, at any rate passably bearable by the publication of the weights for the principal Spring Handicaps, and material for conjecture and speculation has been furnished. And since this is the alleged steeplechase season, we will take the Grand National first, to see what kind of sport the skilful handicapper has to offer us. Naturally the first horse which we enquire about is Ambush II., and it is apparent at first sight that the handicapper has not allowed his sense of loyalty to lure him into leniency, and if anything the weight which has been given to the Royal horse, 12st. 6lb., inclines to the severe side. True it is that he has



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BREAK OUT OF A SCRUMMAGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

pains; but—please—save a little thought and money to spend on the convenience of the great racing public who provide the funds, and without whom the gorgeous brilliancy of Royal Ascot would be an impossibility. It is not much to ask, yet I doubt very much if it will be conceded.

Mr. Faber has no cause to love motor-cars after the narrow escape which his horse Duke of Westminster (for whom he paid the mere trifle of £21,000 the other day) had from one on the road to Kingsclere. Mr. Williams, the veterinary surgeon who examined the horse on behalf of Mr. Faber, was leading the new purchase from Newbury to Kingsclere, when suddenly, on the top of rough, desolate, broken, greenery-scarred common a hideous thing came whizzing, smelling, and rattling out of the darkness. It is a motor-car of the largest and most fearsome kind. What was to be done? To stop the horrid monster was out of the question, and yet—if the horse took fright, how could he be restrained from taking a wild, terror-stricken gallop into the darkness, in the course of which he might meet with fatal injuries? But the gods were good in this instance, and Duke of Westminster took little or no notice of the clattering monstrosity and the situation. But supposing—only supposing—an accident had occurred, would Mr. Faber have had a right to claim damages from the owner? Perhaps some reader learned in the law can tell me.

With regard to the Derby, a few bold speculators are pecking tentatively at the very cramped and artificial prices which an astute ring are offering them; but the business done does not amount to very much, as the Americans say. Duke of Westminster still stands at 11 to 2, but Nasturtium, mainly on account of the rumours of ill-health which have been in circulation about him during the last week, has gone back to 10's, while two new American horses have made their appearance in the persons of Water Wheel and Intruder. One interesting transaction there is to record, and one only—namely, the double of 1,000 to 20 on Duke of Westminster and Ambush II., as these things go, a distinctly good bet.

It is pretty evident, from the entries which have been made for him, that good, or rather constant, use is to be made of Volodyovski, and it is interesting that on more than one occasion he will fight his old battles again with Doricles—as, for instance, in the City and Suburban, wherein the winner of last year's Derby is weighted at 8st. 10lb., and Mr. L. de Rothschild's horse carries 8st. 7lb., leaving a difference of only 3lb. I do not think, looking at the records of the past, and remembering the special circumstances under which each race was run, that 3lb. in any way adequately represents the difference between the two horses. With a fair field and good going I think that Volodyovski could give his rival 5lb., if not 6lb., upon any race-course in England, and, if not lose him altogether, at any rate beat him without undergoing undue distress in the operation. That either of them is a great horse, or even a very good horse, I cannot think, and it is both curious and lamentable that the acknowledged champion of the Turf at the moment—I mean, of course, Epsom Lad—should be a gelding. What this good old horse will do, and when or where he is going to win, is an interesting problem which time only can solve for us. As was only to be expected, he has been allotted top weight in the Lincoln and the City and Suburban, and, indeed, in every handicap for which he has been entered, but in all the cases the weights are so similar that if he wins one he might go on and win the

rest. More unlikely things have occurred than this in racing before, and in all probability more unlikely things will occur again.

Let those who are casting round for a good sire—and they are not a few—take note of the fact that Soliman has gone to the stud and remember what this good horse has done in the past, and also that he is as sound as a bell. The blood is not in fashion, I admit, and the races which he has won have not been the classic races, but, at the same time, he can show a wonderfully consistent record both over jumps and on the flat; also, his price is not exorbitant. BUCEPHALUS.

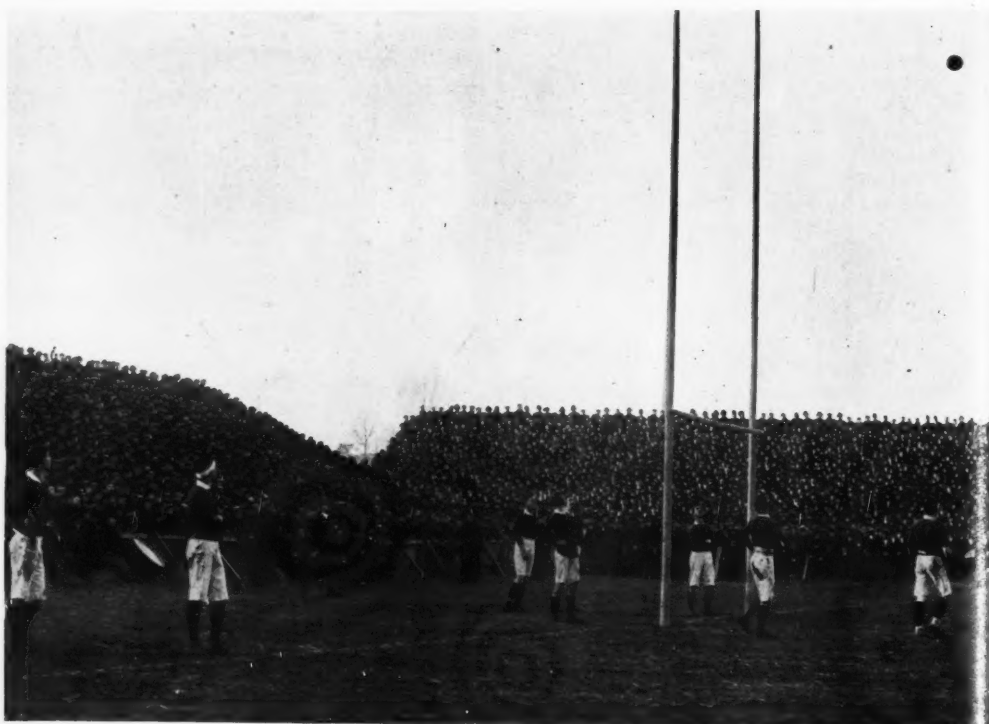
## WALES v. SCOTLAND.

**R**ARE skill and judgment on the part of a photographic artist enable us to perpetuate in pictorial form the moment of

Saturday's great match at Cardiff when the Welsh team, already well ahead of their Scottish rivals, might justly feel that victory was theirs. One can see the oval ball high in air, and a goal as good as scored. It is the irony of fate that this exploit of Strand-Jones, the Llandovery and Oxford back (who has had to borrow a distinguishing name from London), should be recorded faithfully, whereas nothing less than a biography could give an idea of that far finer performance—his memorable run in the English and Welsh match at Blackheath. Both of the pictures showing the tiers of spectators who watched the struggle from start to finish, may cause Mr. Kipling to shudder. Sermons, in verse are of little effect in the face of popular enthusiasm so strongly marked as this.

As for the match, it was almost a runaway business for the Welshmen, whom the ground, which had been protected from the night's frost by straw, suited to a nicety, and the main lesson to be learned from it is that the English defeat at Blackheath was due not, as many so-called experts said, to English weakness, but to Welsh strength. Uncertain as football is, the Cardiff omens are certainly propitious for England in the match against Scotland.

Finally, a critic, who writes sensibly on football, asks what other team than that of Scotland could have afforded to leave out J. E. Crabbie? Our private opinion is that Scotland herself was mistaken in thinking she could



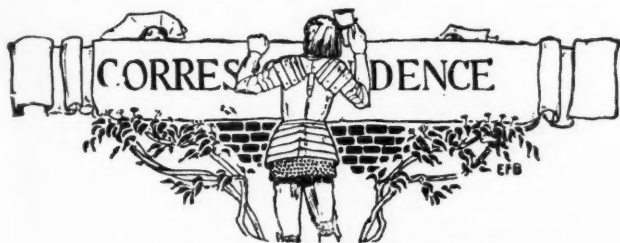
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STRAND-JONES GETS A GOAL FOR WALES.

"COUNTRY LIFE"



afford to leave him out. In the 'Varsity match he struck us distinctly as one of the really great players, always in the right place, vigorous and judicious, who would be a gain to any team.



#### HEIGHT OF FLYING PHEASANTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It might interest your readers to know of a very simple plan of settling how high the pheasants really were during a day's shoot, especially in a hilly country. For some years past I have amused myself by ascertaining the height of various hills from the contours on an Ordnance map. It has been my experience that a pheasant goes off at pretty nearly right angles to the slope of a hill; on flat ground it is somewhat different. Give a liberal allowance for its rise and for the bird rising, as he very often does, when he finds himself obliged to go over a gun, and you will get a pretty fair idea of his height above the gun. Knowing, as I have sometimes, that a bird has flushed at a point 7 yds. above the gun, and gradually dropped to a covert on the other side of the valley, it has amused me to hear said gun solemnly declare that the bird was 7 yds. high and hopelessly out of shot. One point let me impress on the would-be student of contours—do not attempt to argue the height of a bird unless you have a map to produce at home. Nobody will believe you.—DUFFER, Dulverton.

#### FLOWERS FOR A MARSH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have a deep pond in a field near my house, and also a marsh, which is flooded to a depth in winter of 1ft. or 2ft. I shall be glad to know some suitable inexpensive flowers that would be likely to make a gay show on either of these ponds during the summer. What should be started and how put in? Would forget-me-nots start from seed sown by the water-side, and which kind? How are bulrushes and marsh-mallows or kingcups started? The district is North Shropshire, and the soil light. I also have a small greenhouse which I am anxious to stock at once, as I have nothing coming on, and want to have a variety of blooms as soon as possible. The temperature of the house at present is from 45deg. to 50deg. It is a lean-to, and I have just put in two climbing roses. I have been for some years a regular subscriber and interested reader of your paper.—E. W.

[You could not do better than plant the marsh with marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), *Iris pseudacorus*, bulrushes, water plantain, the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum*), yellow loosestrife (*Lysimachia*), and great water-dock. They would also do for the margin of the pond. But you must not expect to be able to plant now to have a bright show this summer. These are all wild plants, and should be collected in the autumn. We are unable to say how such wild plants may be collected in quantity; it is a matter for local enquiry and for obtaining local permission. Some at least of them are to be found in most valley bottoms. Some of them by streams, such as water plantain, could not be found now, as they disappear entirely, and in any case October is the best time to collect and plant. The marsh might also be planted with *Iris Kämpferi*, to be bought of any bulb merchant. Seed of *Myosotis palustris* should be sown in March, and planted out when a fair size; but it would be better still to plant it out, not by the water-side the first year, where it would have at once to contend with the wild grasses, etc., but in nursery beds, where it will quickly spread and make large, strong plants. These pulled to pieces in the autumn and planted by the water-side will give a much larger stock, and, being planted when other vegetation is less active, will have a much better chance. The only way to stock the greenhouse now is to buy plants prepared for flowering this season. Among the most useful will be *Azalea indica*, *Cytisus racemosus*, arum lily, and deutzia, with the usual bulbs, hyacinths, tulips, freesias, and lachenalias. There should be a good proportion of green foliage plants, of which the most useful are aralia and aspidistra and some of the hardier of the indoor ferns, such as *Davallia canariensis*.—ED.]

#### VIOLETS A FAILURE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your interesting article on "Violet Culture in Frames" I gave to our gardener to read. Since reading it I find our frames are left open more, and am hoping that later our plants will do well. Last year I got splendid results, but this year the plants are poor and the few flowers not worth picking. The reason, I am told by the gardener, is that they were neglected in the summer. Could you give me any hints about the plant during the summer months when taken out of the frame, what soil, aspect, and what about water? Is there any good book written on violet culture?—J. K. S.

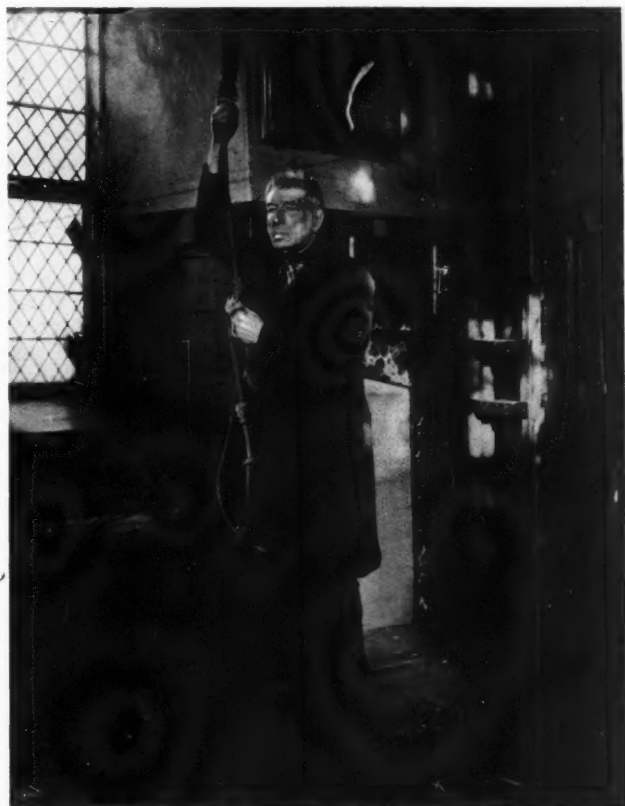
[We should much like to have seen a plant, and if you care to send one we will give you a better answer than is possible from a description. Your gardener may be quite right, or the failure may be due to keeping the lights on too much during the winter, when the plants damp off, at least suffer from an overdose of moisture, with the result that the leaves decay and the flowers are poor and scanty. We think the following quotation from "Gardening for Beginners," pages 58 and 60, will be helpful to you and probably other readers, as no pamphlet or book, as far as we know, deals exclusively with violets. The summer requirements are as follows: "In summer, while the plants are making their growth a shady spot is best, or partially so, as the foliage, being liable to attacks of red spider, is more likely to become infested in a hot and dry position than if the plants are grown in a cool and shady one. North or east borders should be selected, or the shady side of a hedge, between fruit trees and bushes, or any position where the plants will receive shade during the heat of summer. In such places, too, the plants often produce an abundance of flowers in autumn and give a wealth of bloom in spring, but to maintain a continuous

supply throughout the winter the plants must be lifted in September and planted in the warmest and most sunny spot in the garden, such as at the foot of a south wall or in frames. Thus while the plants require shade and moisture during the summer, all the sun possible should reach them during the winter months. . . ." With regard to winter. "Temporary frames may be placed over the beds, but then the shady position the plants occupied during the summer would be against free flowering throughout a season of dull, short days. There're the plants should be removed to a more sunny position, and planted in shallow frames—an ordinary portable frame such as is generally used for growing cucumbers during the summer; indeed, a bed that has been used for this purpose requires little alteration to receive the violet plants. The hillocks need only be levelled down, and the soil trodden somewhat firmly and the tufts put out, say, 1ft. apart. Of course, we are supposing that the soil in the frame will not be more than 18in. from the glass. The nearer the plants can be brought up to the glass the better, so that every ray of sun can reach them. The frame should have a sharp pitch and face south. This will allow rain or snow to pass off quickly, and there is less fear of the foliage suffering from damp or mildew. The violet is hardy and resents fire-heat; protection is all that is needed, and when severe weather is anticipated, pack leaves, bracken, straw, or stable litter round the sides of the frame, and cover the lights with double mats to keep out frost, and the plants are more likely to succeed in such quarters than in heated brick-pits. The plants should be fully exposed whenever the weather permits. Even in wet weather tilt the lights well at the back, harsh winds, frost, and heavy rains being guarded against and ventilation afforded accordingly. These are the simple lines to work upon, and by getting the plants placed in the frames during the first or second week in September, flowers may be expected in October, and by having several varieties a succession of flowers is maintained until the end of April."—ED.]

#### VILLAGE TYPES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There are few aged Britishers of the type shown herewith, and probably not another with such a record as this old fellow. Eighty-three years of age,



he has followed the practice of bell ringing from his youth up, and at his old parish church has rung the same bell for sixty-seven years. Still hale and active, he mounted the dark corkscrew staircase to the belfry so that I might photograph him at his post, at the rope which he has pulled unnumbered times on ordinary occasions, and on all the notable occasions of the last seventy years—the accession of Queen Victoria, her late Majesty's coronation and marriage, on the death of the Prince Consort, on the recovery of the Prince of Wales from his serious illness, on the occasion of the late Queen's Jubilees, and on the sad news of her death; more recently on the proclamation of King Edward VII., and the old chap intends to pull as lustily as ever when the King is crowned. For sixty-six years he has rung out the old year and rung in the new on this faithful bell, and for the same length of time has formed one of a set of hand-bell ringers to entertain the neighbouring gentry for the first fortnight in the New Year.—ESPERANCE.

#### OLD BRIDGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am strangely interested in a late issue of COUNTRY LIFE wherein is a copy of a picture by Turner of Walton Bridge together with its "viaduct," as it is called in your letterpress. The viaduct and the bridge do not seem to be of the same style of architecture, neither do they appear to tail on symmetrically; their incongruity is striking. Now forty years ago I took a sketch of this same viaduct; it spanned meadow-land only, being high and dry from end to end. Turner's bridge proper had disappeared, and in its place was a hideous affair of iron which lestrode the water. I was told that what I was sketching was in

reality the first bridge built over the Thames, and that the river had been diverted. I shut out the iron monstrosity as spoiling an otherwise unique subject. According to your description the viaduct was to enable people to get over the sometimes flooded meadow-land dryshod. In my humble opinion it was a very expensive way of going to work to build so substantial a bridge for that purpose alone, and I maintain, with a certain amount of obstinacy, that my informant was right in one respect, if not in two. Knowing the little ways of the remorseless civil engineer, and also the vagaries of rivers all the world over, I fell into this error with my eyes open, as it were, and I put a legend to the effect I have stated on the back of my water-colour sketch previous to giving it away. I am now told I am totally wrong in my supposition. If any of your readers or any oldest inhabitant would furnish me with data, or what they personally know or may have heard, I should be extremely obliged. Being chained to my chair, unfortunately, I cannot search for myself, and if it were not for COUNTRY LIFE, with its chaste illustrations of beautiful scenes both at home and abroad, scenes that I can enjoy without money or fatigue (without also the kind attentions of my especial aversions, wasps and mosquitoes), I should be dull indeed.—CHARLES F. D. CLARK.

[We believe that the viaduct portion of old Walton Bridge was never over the main river. Palladio himself pointed out the danger that a bridge might be left dry, as Mr. Clark suggests that this was, by a change in the river's course. But these long arched approaches to bridges are quite common where a flat valley liable to floods had to be crossed. One of the best known is that between Abingdon and Culham, partly a causeway, partly arched. There is another at Bromham Bridge, Bedfordshire.—ED.]

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have been interested by the bridges depicted in your number of January 11th. At the beginning of the last century there were few vehicles in the country excepting stage coaches and stage waggons. In earlier times trade was carried on by pack-horses, and farmers rode to market with wives on pillions behind them. In your impression of January 11th "Beggars' Bridge at Glandale" is really, I think, a pack-horse bridge—no space for wheels. There is a fine example of a pack-horse bridge, built of stone, on the estate of J. Thring, Esq., Alford, Castle Cary, Somerset, near his house and the village of Alford, two miles from Castle Cary Station, G.W.R.—(REV.) HARRY M. WELLS, Scarlets, Twyford, Berks.

#### PROBLEMS OF SALMON LIFE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in COUNTRY LIFE in which my name is mentioned. Will you kindly allow me to correct some inaccuracies? No syndicate owns the river Oykel. I have a long lease of the lower six miles of the river from the falls to the Kyle of Sutherland, but salmon go up abundantly to Loch Ailsh, twelve miles above the falls, and I have nothing to do with the river above the falls. There would not, in my opinion, have been any use in my putting, as I have done, yearlings from other stocks into the river if the nets on the Kyle of Sutherland were fished as they used to be. But I hold the whole of these nets, and I have taken off several stations, do not net at all in August, and in March net only with one net one tide a week to see what is passing. These facts would be of no public interest were it not for the opportunity of expressing my opinion that, unless the nets in connection with any river can be either held by one person or worked in harmony, any breeding operations, such as are now carried on in the neighbourhood of the Kyle, or buying of yearlings from other stocks, are only infinitesimal use in improving the angling of a river. The present system of each proprietor or lessee taking toll of salmon as they pass along the coast or up rivers is, with the continual improvement of engines of destruction, fatal to any improvement in the angling or in the stock of salmon. Salmon ought, in my opinion, to be netted only in a short length of some narrow waters which they must all pass, so that those which run this short gauntlet may escape. The reduction of working expenses when compared with the system usually in vogue at present is very great, and I believe that in a few years it would everywhere be found that fishing only about one-tenth part of the number of

stations which are at present fished in most districts would produce a much larger total revenue than is gained at present, and, of course, immensely increase the value of the angling.—H. H. ALMOND, North Esk Lodge, Musselburgh.

#### LOSS OF COLOUR IN GOLDFISH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Would you through the medium of your excellent paper give me some explanation of the following remarkable incident? A lady of my acquaintance has in her possession a bowl of goldfish, and, going into the room where the bowl stood, saw her cat take one of the goldfish out, but on hearing her approach it at once dropped the fish. The lady picked it up, and finding that it still showed signs of life, replaced it in the bowl. It lived, but in a few days its beautiful golden colour changed to a pure dull white, which it still retains.—W. P. W.

[Your letter on the change of colour in a goldfish after an injury from a cat's bite and subsequent dropping on the floor seems to suggest that the fish was poisoned by the bite. Loss of colour in goldfish and other bright-coloured carp sometimes follows injuries, local or otherwise, but the total loss of colour in this case is very curious.—ED.]

#### COAST VILLAGES OF DEVON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the charming series of English villages shown in your columns I hope before long to see some of the cliff and coast villages of the far South and West. Many of them are unique. Those that nestle under the cliffs or up the coombs between Lyme and Sidmouth would be my choice, but there are a hundred such along the south coast of Devon and Cornwall. I own it is difficult to get to them, and I note that the inhabitants also have the greatest reluctance to leave them. It is something creditable to appreciate one's home as these people do. I once met a man who had actually adventured from one of these villages on the vasty deep all the way to the West Indies, whereas I believe he had never before gone further off than Torbay. He spoke of this "experience"

with pious horror, and thankfulness that he had been spared the punishment which such a home-scorning adventure deserved. When off Barbados he had encountered a hurricane, or what appeared to him to be such, and solemnly vowed to his Maker that "If ever I get between they tu little hills again, I'll never roam again." "They tu little hills" are 500ft. high each. But the adjective is a term of endearment. Beer, with its thatched cottages, is perfectly charming. The Head is the last bit of entirely chalk cliff, which thins out westward till it is lost at Salcombe Hill. The tiny haven is almost a complete semi-circle which you could throw a glove across. It looks as if a Titan of the deep had taken one great bite out of the cliff. Down its streets run rills of water from the coombs on the sides of the tiny valley, and the old pump or conduit stands over the largest of them. It is a beautifully clean little place too, and has the credit of having produced the most famous

smuggler ever known on the West Coast. Beyond is a larger and most curious village—Branscombe—popularly supposed to have been made up of the odd bits left when the world was rounded off. Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham, who founded Wadham College, lived there at Edge. The church tower was evidently built for defence. There are various theories to account for the number of Jewish names in this part and other districts of Devon and Cornwall. Beer is, of course, a typical one. May I venture to hint a pretty obvious solution where the names do not ante-date the period referred to in

the explanation? Jews were the personal chattels of the early kings of England. In the reign of Edward I. (1290 A.D.) all the Jews were expelled from England owing to popular agitation, greatly against the wish of the king. But as Duke of Cornwall the king was able to keep the Jews in the limits of the Duchy, and there employed them to work the mines. They did this at one place on Dartmoor, though I cannot now recollect the name. It would be natural for these colonies of Jews to be reinforced, and to give Jewish names to the places they occupied. There is a large Jewish agricultural colony in Essex now, which, if it had been planted in the thirteenth century on unoccupied and unnamed ground, would probably have had a Hebrew name.—DEVONIAN.

